











# SHELLEY IN ENGLAND

NEW FACTS AND LETTERS  
FROM THE SHELLEY-WHITTON PAPERS

BY

ROGER INGPEN

EDITOR OF "THE LETTERS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND FACSIMILES

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## PREFACE

AN explanation may be necessary for adding yet another biography to the already extensive list of books on Shelley. It is now some years since an important discovery relating to Shelley was made by Mr. Charles Withall, of Messrs. Withall & Withall, the successors to Mr. William Whitton, who was entrusted more than a century ago with the legal business of Sir Bysshe and Sir Timothy Shelley. Mr. Charles Withall happened to find, among the papers preserved in his offices, some letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, and also some pamphlets, including copies of *A Necessity of Atheism* and *An Address to the Irish People*. This discovery encouraged Mr. Withall to make a further search, which resulted in bringing to light other letters of the poet, besides a mass of correspondence, including numerous letters from various members of the Shelley family, as well as a large number of legal documents, pedigrees, Mr. Whitton's letter book and diaries and other papers. Mr. Withall caused copies to be made of most of this material, and, after arranging it in chronological order, he submitted the result of his labours to Sir

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John C. E. Shelley of Avington Park and Field Place. The papers were subsequently shown to the publishers of the present volume, who asked me to undertake the work of editing them. Many of the documents related to the estates of the Michells and the Shelleys, and they threw some light on the history of those families. The first of the poet's letters, twenty-nine in number and all unpublished, is dated; February 6, 1810, the last January 31, 1818; from the earlier date to the poet's death and afterwards to the death of the poet's son, Sir Percy Florence Shelley, there are numerous documents, and letters written by Sir Bysshe Shelley, Sir Timothy Shelley, William Whitton, Mary Shelley, T. L. Peacock, and many others, including two unpublished letters of Lord Byron. The most satisfactory manner of utilising this material appeared to be that of retelling the story of Shelley's early years, the portion of his life that he passed in England, especially as many new facts have been brought to light since the publication of Professor Dowden's monumental biography of the poet.

In writing these pages I have refrained from moralising, or attempting any detailed criticism of Shelley's literary work. As a youth he was charming and irresistible to his friends, but he had many faults, and these faults, which to-day may appear to have been mere eccentricities, did not show themselves in that light to his father. Shelley undoubtedly desired a reconciliation with his father, whose nervous

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fears, however, a result chiefly of his solicitor's advice, were subsequently developed into an inflexible attitude towards his son.

The new letters of the poet throw some light on his relations with his father in regard to his life at Oxford, his expulsion from the University, his elopement and marriage with Harriet Westbrook. The fact that Shelley was actually married in Edinburgh is now revealed for the first time, with the date of the ceremony and the name of the officiating minister. That Shelley was arrested on two separate occasions for debt and that he appeared on the boards of the Windsor theatre as an actor in Shakespearian drama, are incidents in his life that hitherto have not been disclosed. The discovery by Mr. Charles Withall, while this book was in the press, of the Coroner's documents relating to the inquest on Harriet Shelley's body, has cleared up certain doubtful points in regard to her death. I have been able to tell something about the fate of Harriet's two children, as also about the life of Sir Percy Shelley, the poet's son by his second wife, and to give some particulars concerning Mary Shelley after the death of her husband.

The manuscript note-book of the poet, of which many pages are reproduced in reduced facsimile at the end of this volume, appears to have been found, after she was salvaged, in the *Ariel*, the ill-fated boat from which Shelley was drowned. Some sand from the Mediterranean Sea still clings to the original book,

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the pages of which long remained stuck together by the brine in which it had been soaked. The book contains a first draft of a portion of *Adonais* and the preface to that poem, besides the lines to Emilia Viviani and some verses in Italian, also a fair copy of a substantial part of *A Defence of Poetry*. The late Dr. Richard Garnett had evidently seen a portion of this book, as he printed, in his *Relics of Shelley*, a few passages from the draft of the preface to *Adonais*.

My acknowledgments are primarily due to Sir John Shelley, who has given his sanction to the publication of the Shelley-Whitton papers and permitted me to make use of many documents connected with his family. Sir John, moreover, has given his ready consent to the reproduction of the Shelley note-book in his possession, and has allowed his family portraits to be included among the illustrations. The miniature portrait of Shelley as a boy, by the Duc de Montpensier, which forms the frontispiece, is reproduced for the first time in photogravure from the original at Avington. Much of the beauty of this picture was lost in the engraving by J. G. Stodart which appears in Professor's Dowden's book, and the pencil drawing by Reginald Easton, now in the Bodleian, cannot be accepted as a faithful copy of the original. I have also to acknowledge the courtesy of Miss Shelley for reading the proofs.

To Mr. Charles Withall I owe a heavy debt of gratitude for his arrangement of the Shelley-Whitton

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papers, in itself a formidable task, which considerably lightened my labours as it enabled me to view the material in chronological sequence. Mr. Charles Withall has likewise constantly advised me on difficult and doubtful points, has carefully collated the documents, and placed at my disposal the copies of the papers relating to the inquest on Harriet Shelley and to her burial, the discovery of the originals of which is due to his industrious research.

His brother Mr. Walter Withall has kindly allowed me to use his photograph of Sir Percy Shelley, and he has supplied me with some interesting recollections of, and facts relating to, him and Jane, Lady Shelley. I have to thank Dr. W. Shirley Arundell for allowing me to reproduce the portrait of William Whitton which is in his possession; and Mr. R. F. Grimley and Nobile Donna Zella Opezzo for the use of the photograph of her great-grandfather, Thomas Medwin. Mrs. Brodie Clark gave me some interesting information with respect to Shelley's first school at Brentford. Mr. Richard Edgcumbe allowed me to print a portion of Sir Walter Scott's letter to Shelley. Mr. Thomas J. Wise related to me some particulars concerning Miss Hitchener. I have again made use of Mary Shelley's letter to Leigh Hunt which Miss Alice Bird kindly allowed me to include in my collection of Shelley's correspondence.

I have to thank Professor Thomas Seccombe and Mr. Arthur Reynolds for reading proofs; Mr. V. C.

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Turnbull for help in deciphering the contents of Shelley's manuscript book ; and Mr. R. A. Streatfeild for transcribing and translating the Italian poems in the same book ; also Mr. W. H. Helm and Mr. Walter H. Whitear for suggestions.

R. I.

*July* 1916.

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PEDIGREE OF SHELLEY'S DESCENT.

# SHELLEY IN ENGLAND

## CHAPTER I

### THE SHELLEYS

Early history—The Shelley and Michelgrove estates—John Shelley—Edward Shelley of Worminghurst—Timothy Shelley and his American wife—Bysshe Shelley : his birth, education, and marriage—The Michells and Field Place—Bysshe Shelley's second marriage—The Duke of Norfolk—Sir Bysshe's declining years—Castle Goring.

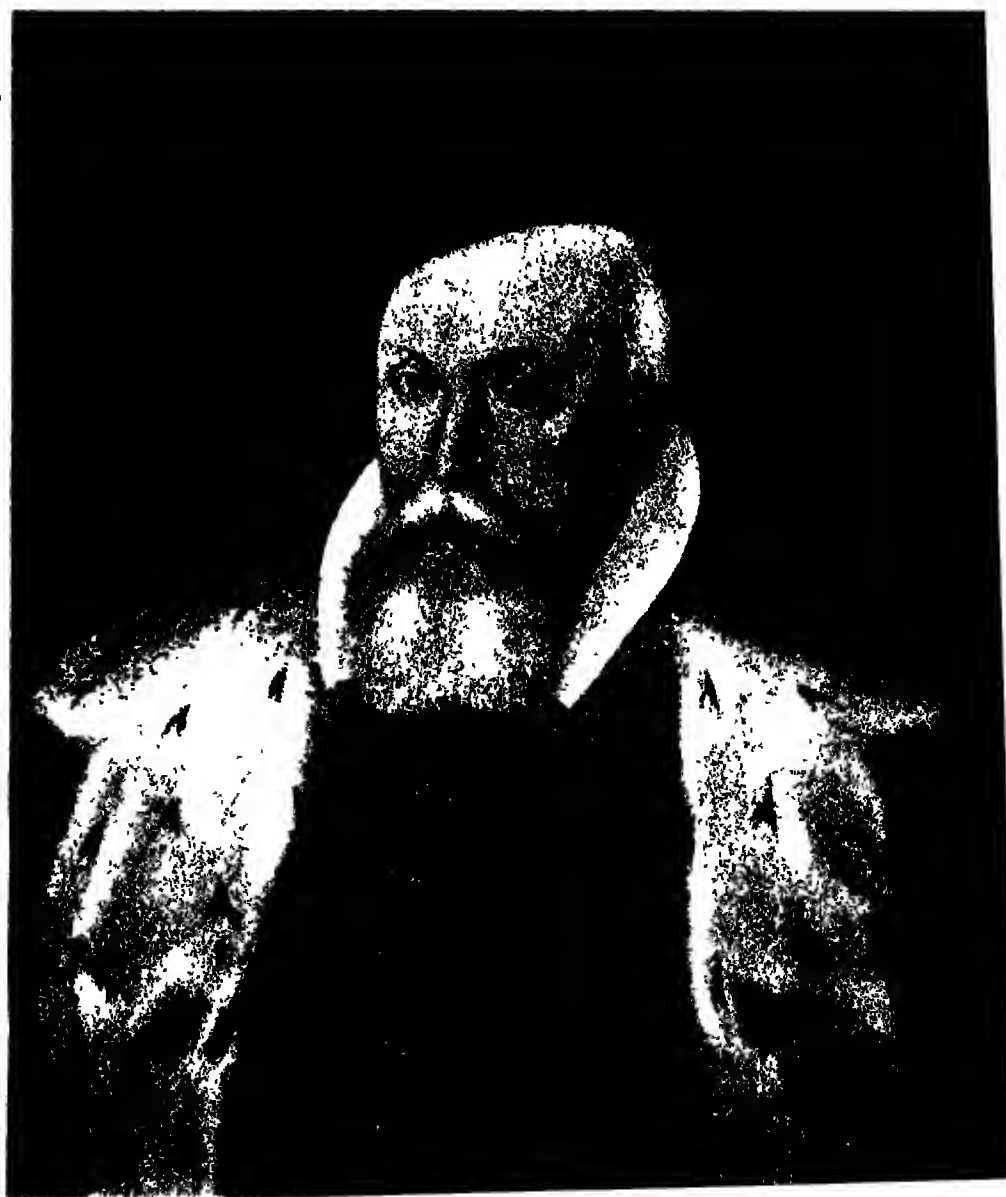
THE Shelley family has long been settled in Sussex, where the name is not uncommon. Genealogists, an habitually sanguine class, have traced the poet's line from an ancient origin. The roll of Battle Abbey contains the name of a Shelley who tradition says came to these shores with the Conqueror. There were Shelleys in the past who held high offices and otherwise distinguished themselves by valiant deeds. Formerly they were staunch adherents to the ancient faith, and one of the name was punished by death for conspiring against Protestant Elizabeth in order to release Catholic Mary Queen of Scots.

The family to which the poet owed his descent

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claimed to have derived its name from the Manor of Shelley, which with Schottis in Knockholt and other lands in Kent was held by Thomas Shelley in the reign of Edward the First. This Manor of Shelley was sold in 1537, but not before a John Shélley had acquired the estates of Michelgrove in Sussex, by his marriage with the daughter of John Michelgrove; and the descendants of this John Shelley now hold the two Shelley baronetcies. His eldest son, Sir William Shelley, Knight, was one of the Justices of the Court of Common Pleas, and grandfather of the John Shelley who was among the earliest to be created a baronet in 1611, the year in which James the First instituted the dignity of baronets. Edward Shelley of Worminghurst, who died in 1588, brother of the above-named Sir William, was the ancestor of Bysshe Shelley (made a baronet in 1806), and of his grandson Percy Bysshe Shelley, whose name alone confers a distinction on that branch of the family which otherwise is not conspicuous.

The poet's great-great-grandfather, John Shelley of Fen Place, Worth, Sussex (born January 27, 1666; married, in 1692, Hellen, one of the co-heirs of Roger Bysshe of Fen Place, Sussex), had five sons. Timothy his third son was born in 1700, and having only a remote chance of succeeding to the family property, like the cadet of many a family of good position, went



SIR WILLIAM SHELLEY

*After the picture attributed to Hans Holbein,  
in the possession of Sir John Shelley Bart*



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forth to make his way in the North American colonies, where he married Mrs. Johanna Plum, a widow of New York. The dates of his emigration, marriage, and return to England have not been identified, but he appears to have settled in Newark, New England, where his two sons, John and Bysshe, were baptized at Christ Church in 1729 and 1731 respectively. The Church archives, however, which might have supplied the date of his marriage and other particulars, were burnt by the British troops in the war of independence.<sup>1</sup>

At Guildford, which is closely connected with Newark, entries exist from 1632 onwards, of the births, marriages, and burials of a number of persons bearing the name of Shelley. But the only substantial record that has been brought to light of Timothy Shelley's sojourn in America is a *post-obit* document dated 1735, and filed among the deeds in New York City, in which he describes himself as a "Merchant of Newark in America," and promises to pay the sum of £100 so soon as he shall be possessed of an estate of the value of £200 a year which belonged to his father, "John Shelley of Fen Place, in the County of Sussex, in Great Brittain, Esq."

It would seem, therefore, that Timothy did not find the fortune in America that he sought. Although

<sup>1</sup> See "The Search for Shelley's American Ancestor," by John Malone. *Century Magazine*, August 1892.

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described as a merchant, Medwin states, but for the truth of the story he says he "cannot vouch," that Timothy's younger son, Bysshe, exercised in America the calling of quack doctor, and married the widow of a miller. If there is any foundation for the legend, it must relate to Timothy Shelley, the great-grandfather of the poet, and not to his grandfather Bysshe, who could have been no more than a child when he came to England.

Timothy Shelley's eldest brother, Bysshe, died unmarried in 1733, and ten years later his brother John, the second son, was declared insane. Timothy may have returned to England some time before 1739, the year of his father's death. In 1738, his father, John Shelley, executed his will, and gave to his wife certain freehold hereditaments in Sussex for life, and after her death he gave the same to his son Timothy and the heirs male of his body. To his grandson Bysshe, then a boy of eight, he devised, by a codicil dated 1739, certain copyholds held of the Manor of Streatham in fee, and bequeathed to him a sum of £2000 and all his jewels, rings, plate, linen, books and things lately belonging to his son Bysshe. By the death of his uncle, Edward Shelley, in March 1748-49, Timothy inherited Field Place, on condition that he should re-settle all the property derived from his father, on his eldest son John, and after his death on Bysshe.



JOHN SHELLEY

*After the picture by Thomas Gainsborough, R A  
\* in the possession of Sir John Shelley, Bart*



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Stolid John Shelley<sup>1</sup> therefore was, in the ordinary course of things, heir to the estates. His grandfather, John, left to him a legacy of £100; to his brother Piercy £500, and from the bequest of the copyholds at Streatham it would seem that the old gentleman had some knowledge of and a liking for his grandson Bysshe, and especially desired to provide for him.

Young Bysshe, a brown-eyed bright lad with good looks and engaging manners, was also a favourite with his grandmother, Hellen Shelley, who in her will executed in 1740 (she died two years later) gave him some of her personal treasures, namely, her walnut-tree cabinet, and her small cabinet inlaid with ivory, all her ready money, mortgages, bonds, bills, notes, plate, diamonds, rings, pearl-necklace, and half her best linen, and she devised to him her freehold land near Willett's Bridge, in East Grinstead. She furthermore "ordered her executor to bring up and educate her said grandson in an handsome manner, and with a scholastick and gentleman like education,

<sup>1</sup> The portraits of John Shelley and his brother Bysshe, both taken in their declining years, offer a striking contrast. There is nothing remarkable in the face of the elder man. It is typical of many a squire in the county who loved good living and the solid comforts of a country gentleman in easy circumstances. As a matter of fact he added nothing by his own exertions to the family estates and died childless. The face of the younger might be that of a diplomatist, of one who thoroughly understood the game of life and who played his cards successfully. As boys one would expect John to be stolid and dull, and Bysshe handsome and vivacious.

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so that he may be fitten to be bred up or put to the Law or some other gentleman like science or employment. And she ordered and did thereby fully direct that her trustees thereafter named take special care that her said grandson should not be sent or putt to sea on any account or pretence whatsoever, or by any persons whomsoever." Although Mrs. Shelley appointed her son Timothy as one of the two trustees and guardians of Bysshe, her bequests to this grandson and the specific injunctions as to his upbringing would seem to show disapproval of Timothy Shelley's American wanderings, and to reflect on his occupation and colonial manners, which evidently were to her mind unworthy of Bysshe. She does not appear to have been concerned about the education of her elder grandson John, and only bequeathed him a legacy of £100.

Bysshe Shelley grew up a remarkably handsome man, fully six feet in height, polished in manners and address, and with a small fortune of his own which he took an early opportunity of increasing by marrying an heiress. In connection with this marriage, Medwin speaks of him as possessing "the *prestige* that never fails to attach itself to the travelled man." Perhaps the tour of Europe was a part of the early training provided for by his thoughtful grandmother. At any rate, at the age of twenty-one, in 1751, he captured the

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heart of Miss Mary Catherine Michell, a girl of sixteen,<sup>1</sup> the orphan daughter of the Rev. Theobald Michell of Horsham, who died in May 1737.

The frequent occurrence of the name of Michell in connection with that of Shelley has led to some confusion, and one of the most frequent errors is that Field Place, the birthplace of the poet, came into the possession of the Shelley family through the marriage of Bysshe Shelley with Mary Michell. As a matter of fact, she never possessed the house, and it did not fall into Bysshe Shelley's hands until many years after her death.

We find the first mention of the house in the will of Richard Mychell the elder, of Warnham, in 1524, who gave his wife the choice "whether she dwelt at Stamerh'm, or at ffelde place." After this date, for more than two hundred years, Field Place remained Michell property, and it passed into the Shelley family in the following manner. Timothy Shelley of Champneys married, in 1664, Katherine, daughter of Edward Michell of Stamerham, by whom he had a son, John Shelley—the poet's great-great-grandfather referred to

<sup>1</sup> In the settlement relating to the estates derived by Miss Mary Catherine Michell from her father and mother, and dated 22nd July 1754, where she is stated to be nineteen years of age, it was agreed between Bysshe Shelley and his wife Mary Catherine that, within three months of her attaining the age of twenty-one, these estates should be settled on Bysshe for life, with remainder to his wife for life, with remainder to the first and every other son of Bysshe and Mary Catherine Shelley in tail male.

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above. Timothy Shelley's second wife was Mary Cheale, who bore him a son, Edward, in 1670. On the death of Timothy Shelley, his widow, Mary Shelley, was married a second time to John Michell of Field Place. This John Michell had by his wife three sons, none of whom left issue, and Field Place thereupon devolved on his daughter Ann, afterwards Mrs. Slyford, the mother of four daughters, from whom the property, having first been mortgaged to, was purchased in June 1729 by the Edward Shelley before mentioned, whose Michell grandparents had held these estates. Edward Shelley was a barrister of the Middle Temple, who lived to a ripe age, and died a bachelor in 1747-48; by his will dated 1746 he devised his estates, including Field Place, to his nephew Timothy (son of the John Shelley mentioned above), and after his death to John, eldest son of Timothy, and if he died without issue, which event happened, to Bysshe for life, with remainder to his second son Timothy in tail male. And he provided that if the said John or Bysshe should marry before twenty-three, or should not conform to the rites or ceremonies of the Church of England, and thus continue the exercise of the Protestant religion, then in either of said cases the estates to them respectively devised should cease.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley was descended from Edward Michell of Stamerham (who was married in 1640) in three lines, as great-great-great-

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To return to Bysshe Shelley's matrimonial project, we find that it did not run smoothly, for Miss Michell's guardian refused to countenance the match. She was, however, undaunted by this opposition and eloped with her handsome suitor to London, where they were married at the chapel of Alexander Keith, the shady Mayfair parson; Bysshe, ignoring the provision in his uncle's will, married at twenty-two. Keith is generally credited as having solemnized the much discussed marriage of the fair Quaker, Hannah Lightfoot, with a mysterious personage supposed to be none other than the son of Frederick, Prince of Wales, young Prince George, afterwards George III. In the early years of the eighteenth century Fleet marriages were a byword, and hardly less notorious were the marriages at Keith's chapel: the parson himself was only second in popularity to the blacksmith of Gretna Green in the estimation of couples bent on contracting clandestine unions. Keith's chapel stood near the present one in Curzon Street, and its incumbent paid just as much attention as suited him to the forms of the legal ceremony. Later, Keith was excommunicated for celebrating marriages without banns or licence, and he was finally imprisoned in the Fleet. Here for some years

great-grandson through his father Timothy Shelley, and as great-great-grandson through Bysshe's marriage with Mary Catherine Michell, and the same relationship through his father's marriage with Miss Pilfold.

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he enjoyed considerable prosperity, but the Marriage Act put an end to his practices ; he fell on evil times and died poverty-stricken in prison.

Altogether, Keith and his four priests are said to have "solemnized" upwards of four thousand weddings. Some biographers have stated that Bysshe Shelley was married in the Fleet, but the Shelley pedigree at the College of Arms states that the marriage took place at "Keith's Chapel, Mayfair, in 1752." Keith, however, could not himself have performed the ceremony, as he was at that date safely lodged in the Fleet.

Bysshe Shelley and his bride left London soon after the marriage for Paris, where, on their arrival, Mrs. Bysshe was attacked with smallpox, from which she was not at the time expected to recover. She lived, however, to become the mother of three children, two daughters and a son Timothy, the poet's father, but she died in 1760 at the early age of twenty-five.

After nine years of widowerhood, Bysshe Shelley married (and is said also to have eloped with) another heiress, namely, Elizabeth Jane Sidney, the daughter of William Perry of Penshurst, and a collateral descendant through her mother, Elizabeth Sidney, of Sir Philip Sidney. His eldest son by this union, John Shelley-Sidney of Penshurst, was made a baronet in 1818, and the baronet's son<sup>1</sup> was created

<sup>1</sup> Philip Charles Sidney, the second baronet ; he married Lady Sophia FitzClarence, daughter of King William IV by Mrs. Jordan.



SIR BYSSHE SHELLEY, BART.

*After the picture by Sir William Beechey, R.  
in the possession of Sir John Shelley, Bart.*



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Baron De L'Isle and Dudley in 1835. From a worldly point of view, therefore, Bysshe Shelley continued to prosper, for he inherited the Shelley family estates in 1790 on the death, without issue, of his elder brother, John Shelley of Field Place. From his early days it was Bysshe Shelley's desire to found a great house, and to retain for his family by entail the fortune he had amassed. He attained his object by making two wealthy marriages, and by luck which favoured him in his undertakings. As a younger son of a younger son, born far from England in a small country town of the American colonies, Bysshe Shelley's prospects of inheriting the family estates must at one time have seemed remote, and it was only by a chain of fortuitous events that they ultimately reached him. Yet this clever, ambitious man lived to become one of the wealthiest landowners in the county of Sussex. He was not the kind of man to neglect anyone who was likely to be of use to him, and he was careful to cultivate the friendship of Charles, eleventh Duke of Norfolk. A firm supporter he was of the Whig party as represented by the Duke, who, for services in the past and perhaps as a security of his devotion in the future, in 1806 secured a baronetcy for Bysshe Shelley.

Except an intelligent face, and great worldly possessions, there was little to attract either in the character or person of "Jockey of Norfolk," as the Duke

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was familiarly termed. As a youth he did not trouble himself with book-learning, and as a young man he turned Protestant for political reasons. A sensualist, glutton, drunkard and gambler, despite his enormous size, he loved to travel at break-neck pace all over the kingdom, from Greystoke, his place in Cumberland, to Holme Tracey and Arundel Castle. When in London he was habitually to be found at the gaming clubs in St. James's Street, and he pursued his innumerable amours to the end. Many stories are told of his hard drinking, his gargantuan appetite for beefsteaks, his lack of personal cleanliness, and his unwieldiness. Shortly before his death he was subject to lethargy. Charles Morris, in *The Clubs of London*, relates that towards the evening the Duke would become immovable in his chair. "He would then request the bell to be rung three times ; this was a signal for bringing in a kind of easy litter, consisting of four equidistant belts, fastened together by a transverse one, which four domestics placed under him, and thus removed his enormous bulk, with a gentle swinging motion, up to his apartment. Upon these occasions the Duke would say nothing, but the whole thing was managed with great system and in perfect silence." Such was the man into whose hands Sir Bysshe and his son entrusted their honour.

Like his father, Sir Bysshe is said to have actually

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practised medicine in London in partnership with Dr. Graham, notorious for his Temple of Health, at which Emma Hart (afterwards Lady Hamilton) assisted, but the story is discredited. His grandson, the poet, assured Hogg he had heard on good authority that Sir Bysshe, with whom he was acquainted, had lent the Doctor money to enable him to set up a purple chariot.

Medwin's recollections of Sir Bysshe Shelley in his declining years are by no means edifying. He is described as having a noble and aristocratic bearing ; the portrait of him by Beechey, at Avington, shows him to have been decidedly handsome, and there is some likeness traceable in the upper part of his features to those of his illustrious grandson. Age, however, had brought no influence to mellow his selfish and acquisitive nature : he was hard-headed and headstrong to the last.

For his children he probably felt little affection, and he certainly showed none ; two of his daughters by the second marriage led such miserable existences under his roof that they married without his consent rather than endure his temper ; he retaliated by making a scanty provision for them in his will.

His eldest son and heir, Timothy, lived in dread of him, but managed to avoid an open quarrel with his sire. He received every morning, so Medwin assures us, a bulletin of the old man's health,

## Shelley in England

hardly, however, it may be presumed, as an act of filial piety.

In his grandson, Percy, Sir Bysshe is said to have shown an interest, and he even went so far as to pay the bills of the Horsham and Worthing printers who put into type some of the boy's earliest efforts at writing, which apparently are no longer extant. Hogg, who says that Shelley used to speak of his grandfather without love or hate, but with contemptuous indifference, suggests a certain indistinct sympathy as existing between these two natures, so opposite and antagonistic, on the common ground that they both disliked Timothy Shelley, whom the old man first taught his grandson to curse. Shelley told Hogg that whenever he went "with his father to visit Sir Bysshe he always received him with a tremendous oath, and continued to heap curses on his head as long as he remained in the room."<sup>1</sup> Speculative opinions had no attraction for the baronet, whose matter-of-fact mind allowed him to treat with toleration, born of indifference, those subjects that delighted his grandson and so greatly scared his son.

Shelley's regard for his grandfather, if it ever existed,

<sup>1</sup> "Sir Bysshe being Ogygian, gouty, and bed-ridden, the poor old baronet had become excessively testy and irritable; and a request for money instantly aggravated and inflamed every symptom, moved his choler, and stirred up his bile, impelling him irresistibly to alleviate his sufferings by the roundest oaths" (Hogg, i. 139).

## The Shelleys

did not survive his youth, for in January 1812 he wrote to Miss Hitchener, "I hear from my uncle that Sir B. Shelley is not likely to live long—that he will die soon. He is a complete atheist, and builds all his hopes on annihilation. He has acted very ill to three wives. He is a bad man. I never had respect for him: I always regarded him as a curse upon society. I shall not grieve at his death. I will not attend his funeral. I shall think of his departure as that of a hard-hearted reprobate." I do not know whether Sir Bysshe could claim to have married thrice, but he certainly did not pine for the want of feminine society, as in his will, in which he disregards the just claims of some of his lawfully begotten issue, he does not forget to provide for several of his children born out of wedlock.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century Sir Bysshe Shelley began to build, on a part of the settled estates, comprised in the settlement of 1791, his great mansion, Castle Goring, which is said to have cost him upwards of eighty thousand pounds. The house, which stands on rising ground surrounded by about 130 acres of land, commands an extensive view of the English Channel, is of an extraordinary design and a substantial proof of Sir Bysshe's eccentric character. This ambitious mansion is really composed of a pair of buildings joined in the centre, having two distinct styles of architecture which were also carried out in the interior

## Shelley in England

decorations. The south-west front was designed by Biagio Rebecca, the Italian decorative painter, in the Palladian style from a villa in the vicinity of Rome. The north-east façade, described as "Modern Gothic," is a reduced copy of a portion of Arundel Castle. Among the apartments on the ground floor was one which Sir Bysshe designed for a "Justice Room," but the house was still unfinished at his death, and soon afterwards (on August 21, 1816) was put up for sale by auction, but failed to find a purchaser. It is not surprising, for in an order of the Court of Chancery of January 16, 1819, concerning the property, the house is described as in an unfinished and uninhabitable state.

In consequence of want of attention it had become infested with dry-rot, which had already made great ravages, and, if it were suffered to remain much longer without repair, there would not have been an inch of sound timber on the premises. The only alternative was to pull down the building and dispose of the materials, which would have produced several thousand pounds. But no such power existed under the settlement of 1791; it was therefore suggested that the difficulty might be overcome by an Act of Parliament. Nothing, however, was done, for, in December 1824, Sir Timothy Shelley leased the house to Captain George Richard Pechell for fourteen years at a yearly rent of £20. Modest as this sum appears,

16



NORTH-EAST FRONT



SOUTH-WEST FRONT

CASTLE GORING



## The Shelleys

the lessee covenanted for the tenant to put the place in repair within two years at his own cost, and to insure the building against fire for £12,000. And it much needed a hand to arrest the decay into which it was crumbling from dry-rot. The floorings of some of the rooms had fallen in, 165 large squares of glass besides smaller ones were wanting, the woodwork was rotting, the plastering was injured by damp, and handles, locks, and keys were wanting. So much was required to be done to the building, that Captain Pechell was not required to repair certain portions of it, nor to complete the fittings of a space intended for the library.

The house with the land and buildings, including a farm, the whole comprising 139 acres, was sold in 1845 for £11,250 to Captain Pechell, then in occupation, by the poet's widow, Mary Shelley, and her son, Sir Percy F. Shelley.

Sir Bysshe as an old man was eccentric and penurious. He spent a fortune in building Castle Goring, and never completed it for his occupation, but passed the last years of his life at Arun House, a small place near the town-hall at Horsham overlooking the river Arun, where he practised the strictest economy and was attended by an old servant, "as great a curiosity as his master." According to one authority<sup>1</sup> he was

<sup>1</sup> The unidentified newspaper editor, who in his *Reminiscences—Fraser's Magazine*, June 1841—says of Sir Bysshe, to whom he had been introduced by his grandson the poet, that, according to the current gossip of the place

## Shelley in England

as indifferent to his personal appearance as he was to his style of living. He wore a round frock, and one of his diversions was a daily visit to the taproom of a humble tavern in the town, "not drinking" but as a silent auditor of the local gossip. At the time of his death in 1815, at the age of eighty-four, besides the will and its elaborate accompaniment of legal documents, there were found in his room, according to Medwin, bank-notes to the amount of ten thousand pounds, some between the leaves of the few books he possessed, while others were discovered in the folds of the sofa, or sewn into the lining of his dressing-gown. Sir Bysshe's habit of hoarding money in his house is exemplified by some extracts from his trustees' accounts, with which I have been furnished. The value of the bank-notes discovered in the baronet's house was actually £12,816.

in which he resided, he "had in his youth either been crossed in love, or had in a fit of passion committed some act of violence which had left a strong and melancholy impression on his mind. He had become what some persons would call eccentric, but he always struck me as having a dash of insanity."

## CHAPTER II

### CHILDHOOD

Timothy Shelley—His marriage—Field Place—Birth of Percy Bysshe Shelley—His appearance as a boy—Miss Hellen Shelley's stories of her brother's childhood—Early verses on a cat—His retentive memory—Begins to learn Latin.

EITHER the education of Timothy, Sir Bysshe's eldest son, was sadly neglected, or the recipient failed to derive much advantage from it. It was intended that he should enter Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge,<sup>1</sup> which was founded by Lady Frances Sidney, Countess of Sussex, and in which the family of his stepmother had interests. •But he eventually went to University College, Oxford, at which college Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, founded two scholars' places, and the Sidneys as the heirs of Earl of Leicester had the right of nominating these two scholars. After the usual course of studies he made the Grand Tour of Europe, but the only benefit that he derived from his travels was a smattering of French and a bad picture of Vesuvius in eruption, "if we except a certain *air* miscalled that of the old school, which he could put on or off as

<sup>1</sup> Medwin, vol. i. p. 10. Cf. also *University College, Oxford*, by G. M. Edwards, p. 210.

## Shelley in England

the occasion served." He did not possess the force of character of his father, who was a cynic, a materialist,<sup>1</sup> and latterly a miser ; he had a kinder heart, though he made the fatal mistake of trusting his weak head to rule his heart.<sup>1</sup> His well-meant intentions were often misdirected : he had a passion, but little aptitude, for managing people, and he treated his servants well. For outward forms and conventions he was a great stickler : a church-goer, a reader of Paley's theology (whose chief arguments he claimed to have originated), he was a fussy, somewhat commonplace type of the squire of his day. Notwithstanding the fact that his literary preferences inclined to La Rochefoucauld and Lord Chesterfield, he did not shine as a letter-writer : as Member of Parliament for the Rape of Bramber, he failed to make any figure in the House, but was merely a consistent supporter of his own party.

Sir Bysshe had established a precedent for his family on the all-important question of marriage ; one may therefore be sure that the grand opportunity of Timothy Shelley's life was watched by his father with very critical eyes, and as one who had grown up with the tradition before him, if he did not marry money, his choice fell upon a gentlewoman of birth equal to his own. Timothy Shelley had engaged himself before he

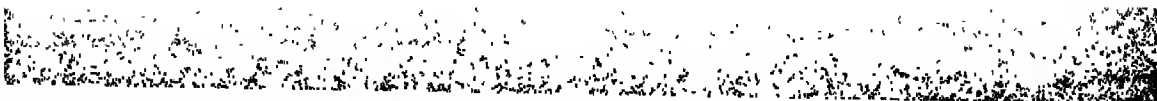
<sup>1</sup> " He was slight of figure, tall, very fair, with the Shelley blue eyes " (Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 4).

## Childhood

set out on his European travels to Elizabeth, a distant cousin, and daughter of Charles Pilfold of Effingham Place, and was married to her in October 1791 at West Grinstead. She was a great beauty, and had been brought up by her aunt, Lady Ferdinand Pool, the wife of the father of the turf. Mrs. Timothy Shelley was narrow-minded, mild and tolerant, a good letter-writer, but no reader of books; it was greatly to her disappointment that her son showed little disposition to take part in the field-sports of a country-gentleman. Timothy Shelley settled at Field Place, which, Miss R. C. Travers<sup>1</sup> says, seems to have been nearly always a secondary or dower house. Sir Bysshe, having other estates in Sussex and elsewhere, gave up his life interest to his son Timothy, in Field Place, which had come into his possession in 1790 by the death of his brother, and in this now historic house Timothy's first child and son, Percy Bysshe Shelley, came into the world on Saturday, August 4, 1792.<sup>2</sup> Field Place House, which is situated

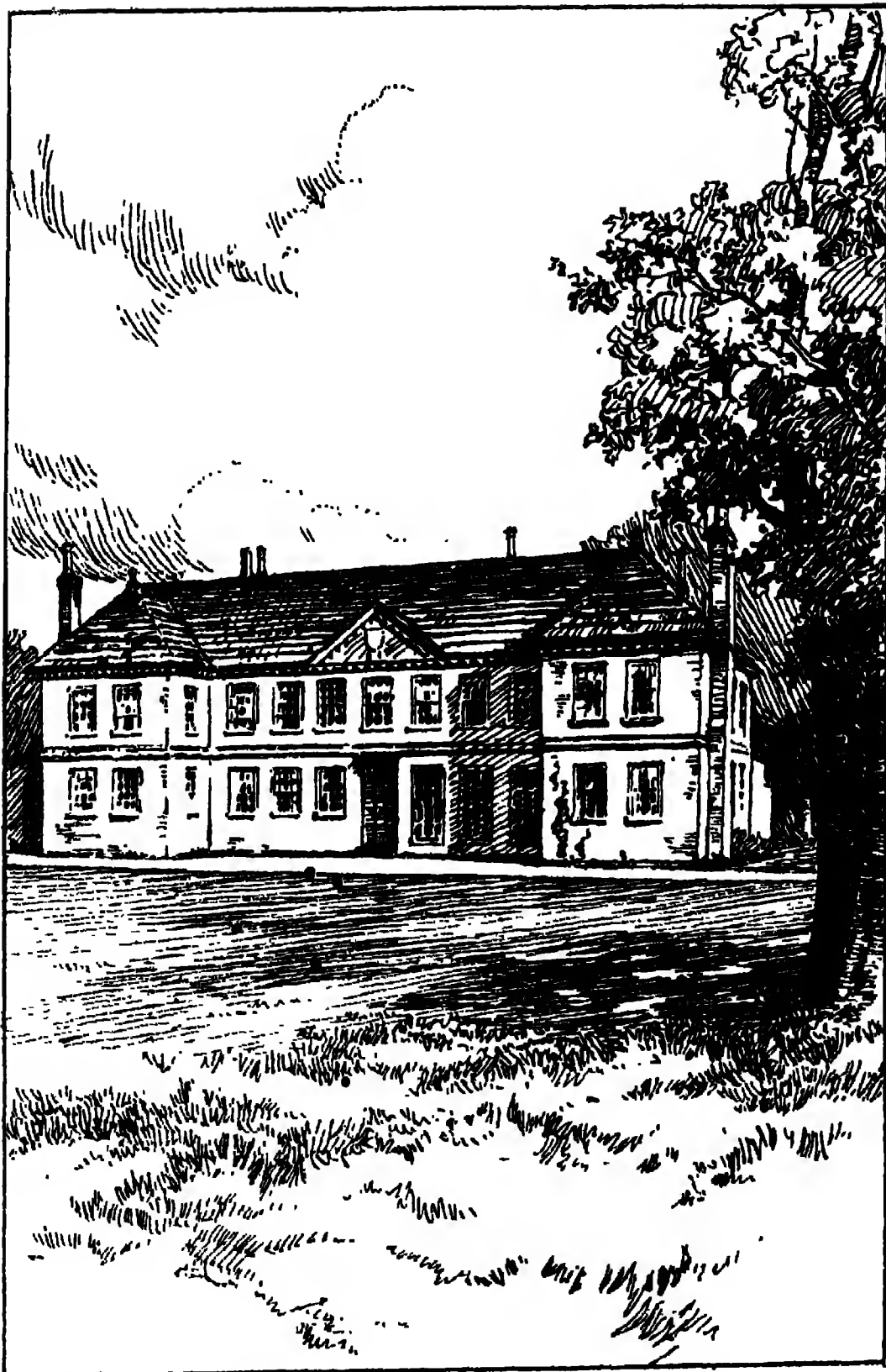
<sup>1</sup> In the following description of Shelley's birthplace I have made liberal use, and in some cases have adopted the phrasing, of an interesting and valuable illustrated description of Field Place by Miss R. C. Travers, now Mrs. H. M. Hyndman (her father, Major Travers, at one time occupied the house), which appeared in the *English Illustrated Magazine* under the title of "The Youth of Shelley."

<sup>2</sup> Medwin states (vol. i. p. 1) that Shelley derived the name of Percy from "an aunt who was distantly connected with the Northumberland family."



## Shelley in England

in the parish of Warnham, about two and a half miles west of Horsham, stands in well-wooded grounds some distance from the road, in a slight hollow surrounded by trees, and is approached by a drive from the south. The ffield place mentioned in 1524 by Richard Mychell in his will, which is probably the core of the present building, was a timbered Sussex farmhouse, with the magnificent kitchen and the many little old rooms still remaining. In 1678 the Michells built the new front of Field Place, and a stone carving of their coat of arms with this date appeared under the central gable of the house until a recent tenant removed it. The stone was rescued by a local tradesman, who built it face inwards into the walls of a modern cottage near Broad-bridge Heath, where it may still be found. The Field Place of to-day is a comfortable gabled structure "roofed with great slabs of Horsham stone"; the pillared portico, or verandah, in front of the building which joins the two wings is a modern addition, put up in 1846 by Sir James Duke, a former tenant of the house. The front door in Shelley's time stood under the central gable, but it has since been removed and its place filled by a plaster relief of the nine muses, which was known as "Shelley's ladies" during Major Travers' occupation. The house remains much as Shelley knew it: the fine old oak staircase must often have echoed with his footsteps and those of his



*Drawn by D. Collins*

## FIELD PLACE

AS IT WAS IN SHELLEY'S TIME



## Childhood

sisters, but one cannot say to what extent the grounds may have changed since his time. His great-uncle, John Shelley, who, like his grandfather Bysshe, was born in America, rebuilt the stables, and it has been suggested that he planted the fine rhododendrons in the American garden.

On the ground floor in the south wing there is a room off the drawing-room formerly known by the young people as "Confusion Hall," and over it on the next floor is the room in which Shelley was born. From the windows of this quiet and pleasant chamber he first took his view of the world—the south meadow, the lawn, and the great trees. Above the fireplace there is a brass tablet, put up by Sir Percy Shelley, inscribed with the date of the poet's birth and the following quatrain by Dr. Richard Garnett :

" Shrine of the dawning speech and thought  
Of Shelley ! Sacred be  
To all who bow where Time has brought  
Gifts to Eternity."

Six other children were born to Timothy Shelley on the following dates : Elizabeth, May 10, 1794 ; Hellen, January 29, 1796, and who died four months later ; Mary, June 9, 1797 ; another daughter also named Hellen, September 26, 1799 ; Margaret, January 20, 1801 ; and John, the youngest, March 15, 1806. The daughters were all remarkable for their beauty ; Hogg says it was often observed that " very few families

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can boast of four such handsome girls." And Bysshe (as he was always called in the family) was as good-looking as his sisters: a slight figure, with beautiful hands, white skin, and fair ringlets; his eyes are described as very dark blue. Miss Hellen Shelley, who has preserved, from recollection or from hearsay, most of the stories of Shelley's childhood, was only about twelve when Shelley left home for good. She is, however, our chief authority; in writing of her brother's personal appearance, she remembered that "his figure was slight and beautiful; his hands were models," and she referred to the "fixed beauty" of his eyes. On another occasion she says: "The engraved portraits of Bysshe, which have hitherto been published, are frightful pictures for a spiritual-looking being like a poet. Yet I do not expect that my ideal will ever be created, because he must have altered from boy to man. His forehead was white, the eyes deep blue—darker than [his brother] John's. He had an eccentric quantity of hair in those days, when he came by stealth to Field Place; and Elizabeth, on one occasion, made him sit down to have it cut, and be made to look like a Christian." The written records of Bysshe's appearance as a child are borne out in the beautiful miniature portrait by the Duc de Montpensier now at Avington, which forms the frontispiece to the present volume.

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Bysshe's brother John was so much his junior that he hardly enters into his life, but Miss Hellen Shelley recollected seeing the two boys at play together in the grounds at Field Place under the fir trees on the lawn, Bysshe, then from Eton on holiday, gently pushing down his little brother in petticoats, to let him rise and beg for a repetition of such falls, rolling with laughing glee on the grass, and then wheeling the child along quickly in a little cart and upsetting him in the strawberry bed.

Bysshe spent his early days at Field Place, where he was brought up with his sisters, to whom his good temper remained a pleasant memory, and Miss Hellen Shelley could not recall a single instance of the reverse towards any of them. He was an imaginative boy, and was fond of inventing wonderful stories for his sisters' entertainment, stories in the truth of which he himself would believe later. These tales were listened to eagerly evening after evening when the little girls were admitted to the dining-room for dessert. They would sit on his knees, and he would tell them about the great Tortoise which lived in Warnham pond,<sup>1</sup> a tale probably founded on an ancient local legend of a

<sup>1</sup> Medwin tells us (vol. i. p. 123) that Mr. Timothy Shelley kept a boat "at Warnham pond, a lake of considerable extent, or rather two (lakes) connected by a drawbridge, which led to a pleasure-garden and a boat-house." There is a reference to the pond in the following letter, the earliest extant of Shelley's voluminous correspondence, which was

## Shelley in England

Great Old Snake that haunted the neighbourhood : also with another veteran, “ a snake of unusual magnitude,” that had frequented the gardens of Field Place, according to tradition, for three hundred years ; it was accidentally killed by the carelessness of a gardener with his scythe while mowing the grass.

The spacious garret under the roof of Field Place was made the fancied habitation of an old grey alchemist with a long beard whom Bysshe promised his sisters that they should see “ some day.”

His amusements were not, however, always of such a harmless character. He had a passion for playing with fire, and one of his tricks was to fill a portable stove with some inflammable liquid and carry it flaming through the kitchen to the back door. His cousin, John Grove, says that “ in one of his experiments

written a few days before his eleventh birthday, and three years earlier than the birth of his brother John :

*Monday, July 18, 1803.*

DEAR KATE,—We have proposed a day<sup>a</sup> at the pond next Wednesday ; and, if you will come to-morrow morning, I would be much obliged to you ; and if you could anyhow bring Tom over to stay all night, I would thank you. We are to have a cold dinner over at the pond, and come home to eat a bit of roast chicken and peas at about nine o'clock. Mama depends upon your bringing Tom over to-morrow, and if you don't we shall be very much disappointed. Tell the bearer not to forget to bring me a fairing—which is some ginger-bread, sweetmeat, hunting-nuts, and a pocket-book. Now I end.—I am not, Your obedient servant,

P. B. SHELLEY.

MISS KATE,  
HORSHAM, SUSSEX.

Free, P. B. SHELLEY.

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he set fire to the butler, Laker, and then soused him with a pail of water."

On taking up the study of chemistry and electricity he became a terror to his sisters, especially when he offered to cure their chilblains by means of an electric battery. Miss Hellen Shelley relates an anecdote of her brother's kind thought for a sufferer from this painful complaint. One morning while she was seated with others in the little sitting-room at Field Place, a countryman was observed to pass the window with a truss of hay on a prong over his shoulders : the man when challenged proved to be Bysshe in a rustic garb, on his way to a young lady at Horsham who had been prescribed hay-tea for her chilblains. There is another story of his pranks at Field Place. He once applied to Colonel Sergison in good Sussex dialect for the post of gamekeeper's boy, and his suit was considered seriously, whereupon he gave vent to an explosion of boisterous laughter.

Sometimes he would take his sisters for long rambles, and when his short-cuts meant climbing fences and traversing muddy fields to the detriment of their shoes he would carry the little one of the party. Miss Hellen Shelley's stories of her brother show that he was full of pleasant attentions to children. His desire to adopt and educate a child was one that he cherished for some time. She says that he "often talked seriously of

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purchasing a little girl for that purpose : a tumbler, who came to the back door to display her wonderful feats, attracted him, and he thought she would be a good subject for the purpose, but all these wild fancies came to naught. He would take his pony and ride about the beautiful lanes and fields surrounding the house, and *talk* of his intention, but he did not consider that board and lodging would be indispensable, and this difficulty probably was quite sufficient to prevent the talk from becoming reality."

Once <sup>1</sup> when he was confined to the house with illness and not allowed to go out, he came to the window and kissed his sister, Margaret, through the pane of glass, and she remembered his face and lips pressed against the window. To continue his sister Hellen's recollections, she says that at a later period it was his habit to walk out alone at night ; the old servant of the family would follow him, and on returning say, " Master Bysshe only took a walk and came back." He was full of cheerful fun, and would amuse himself with writing verses ; there were some lines satirising the peculiarities of a French governess, who unfortunately happened to see them, to the consternation of her pupils. On another occasion he wrote a play with his eldest sister, and sent it to Matthews, but it was re-

<sup>1</sup> In 1806.

## Childhood

turned as unsuitable for acting.<sup>1</sup> These early effusions have perished, but the following lines, which are probably Shelley's earliest efforts in verse that have been preserved, are worth quoting. The date given to them in Mr. Thomas Hutchinson's edition of Shelley's poems is 1800. The sheet upon which they were copied by his sister is headed with the drawing of a tabby-cat :

“ A cat in distress,  
Nothing more, nor less,  
Good folks, I must faithfully tell ye,  
As I am a sinner,  
It waits for some dinner  
To stuff out its own little belly.

You would not easily guess  
All the modes of distress  
Which torture the tenants of earth ;  
And the various evils,  
Which, like so many devils,  
Attend the poor souls from their birth.

Some a living require,  
And others desire  
An old fellow out of the way ;

<sup>1</sup> This failure, however, did not deter him from his desire to become a writer for the stage, for in an unpublished letter, of uncertain date, but probably anterior to 1811, written from Field Place to Graham, Shelley promised to write some songs to be set to music by Woelff (Graham's music master) whom he desired to compose an overture for a farce. He also inquired for the addresses of the manager of the Lyceum and Covent Garden Theatres, as he had a farce and a tragedy that he wished to offer them. “The tragedy,” he adds, “is not yet finished.”

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And which is the best  
I leave to be guessed,  
For I cannot pretend to say.

One wants society,  
Another variety,  
Others a tranquil life ;  
Some want food,  
Others, as good,  
Only want a wife.

But this poor little cat  
Only wanted a rat,  
To stuff out its own little maw ;  
And it were as good  
*Some* people had such food,  
To make them *hold their jaw !* ”

Shelley's memory was always remarkable, and, even when he was a small child, very retentive ; as an instance, his sister says she had frequently heard from her mother that he repeated word for word Gray's verses on the “ cat drowned in a tub of gold fishes ” after once reading them, and he would at his father's bidding recite long Latin quotations. As a young child he shared the same education as his sisters, but at six he went daily to learn Latin at the house of the Rev. Mr. Edwards, the Vicar of Warnham, whom Medwin describes as “ of only limited intellect,” and with a pronounced Welsh accent.

Except for his holidays, Shelley spent very little

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time at Field Place after his tenth year, when he left home for boarding-school.

One direct reference only in Shelley's verse to the days of his childhood has been preserved in the fragment printed among the poems written in 1816 :

“ Dear Home, thou scene of earliest hopes and joys,  
The least of which wronged Memory ever makes  
Bitterer than all thine unremembered tears.”

The following lines in *Zastrozzi* may also be reminiscent :

“ . . . that ecstatic, that calm and serene delight only experienced by the innocent and which is excited by a return to the place where we have spent our days of infancy.”

## CHAPTER III

### SCHOOLDAYS

Shelley goes to school at Syon House Academy—His cousin, Tom Medwin—Description of the schoolhouse—Dr. Greenlaw—Sir John Rennie—Petty tyranny of the boys—Shelley's joke—His friend—His miscellaneous reading—Adam Walker—Astronomy—Dancing lessons—Leaves Syon House School.

WHEN Shelley reached the age of ten, in 1802, he was sent as a boarder to Syon House Academy, Isleworth, near Brentford, presided over by the Rev. Dr. Greenlaw, where his cousin, Tom Medwin,<sup>1</sup> son of the Horsham lawyer, had preceded him. Syon Park House, as it is now called, is situated on the London Road nearly opposite the lane that leads to Syon Park. It is enclosed by high walls, but can be easily identified by the Gazebo, or summer-house, which surmounts the wall on the public road. The house is a solid structure and has been standing for more than three

<sup>1</sup> Concerning his relationship with Shelley, Medwin says, "Miss Michell, Sir Bysshe's first wife, was my grandfather's first cousin, and my mother bore the same degree of consanguinity to Miss Pilfold [Shelley's mother]." Although Medwin was Shelley's senior he does not appear to have protected him at school. In later life, at least, he was devoted to Shelley, and his biography of the poet was written in terms of eulogy. He, Medwin, however, failed to make the best use of his facilities for writing the life of Shelley, whom he had known as a boy, and also during the last year of his life.

## Schooldays

centuries, the family of its present owner, Colonel Brodie Clark, having held it for over a hundred years. It formerly belonged to, and it may have been built for, Dr. John King, who in 1611 became Bishop of London. Mrs. Brodie Clark tells me that the American heroine, Princess Pocahontas, visited the Bishop at this house during her brief sojourn in England. This must have been between 1616 and 1617, for she landed during the earlier year, and died off Gravesend in the following March immediately after having embarked for Virginia. The Bishop, who wrote verses himself, was father of a poet, Henry King, afterwards Bishop of Chichester. The old house, therefore, is associated with more than one poet : the pious writer of "The Exequy" and the author of "Adonais."

The precise position of Shelley's school at Brentford had latterly been lost sight of, even Professor Dowden was without definite knowledge of its exact position when he wrote his Life of Shelley, and it remained for Mr. Fred Turner of the Brentford Public Library to identify it. Since Shelley's time it has undergone some changes, and a modern addition has been made to the building at the eastern end. The schoolroom has disappeared ; it extended to the high road and was probably at one time the old banqueting-hall. The exact position of the playground can no longer be located, although in the garden there remained till

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recently an old stump with some staples attached to it, which is supposed to have been a relic of the Bell tree, an elm so called from its having suspended from its branches the “odious bell whose din,” says Medwin, “when I think of it, yet jars in my ears.”

Just inside the high walls that surrounded the house, and which gave it a somewhat gloomy appearance, there were excellent gardens and a playground, which Medwin describes as of very limited dimensions—a few hundred yards—and surrounded by four stone walls. The situation was open and healthy, and the total number of boys about fifty, ranging from eight to sixteen years of age. They were well fed and taken care of by Mrs. Greenlaw and her sister, Miss Hodgkins. The eldest daughter, Miss Greenlaw, taught the youngest boys their letters, whilst the doctor and his assistants devoted themselves to the others, the subjects comprising chiefly the classics, writing, arithmetic, French, and occasionally geography and astronomy.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Greenlaw, a Scotch clerical Doctor of Laws, was in old age “of a sanguinary complexion ; he indulged in an inordinate quantity of snuff from his Scotch mull, and he usually wore his spectacles above his bushy eyebrows. Though not wanting in good qualities he possessed a choleric and capricious temper, which was

<sup>1</sup> Rennie.

## Schooldays

influenced by the daily occurrences of a domestic life not the most harmonious, and of which his face was the barometer and his hand the index.”<sup>1</sup>

He was a tolerable Greek and Latin scholar, but he seems to have had his limitations and prejudices, and he did not engender in Shelley his love of the classics. “He acquired his knowledge of them, as it were, intuitively, and seemingly without study, for during school hours he was wont to gaze at the passing clouds, all that could be seen from the lofty windows which his desk fronted, or watch the swallows as they flitted past, with longing for their wings; or would scrawl in his school-books—a habit he always continued—rude drawings of pines and cedars, in memory of those on the lawn of his native home. On these occasions, our master would sometimes peep over his shoulder, and greet his ears with no pleasing salutation.”<sup>2</sup> When Dr. Greenlaw was in one of his good humours he indulged in what he termed *facetiae*, and to Shelley’s disgust but to the amusement of the school he would on such occasions relate a coarse joke.

Syon House Academy evidently did not make such

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Medwin. Hogg says that, in walking to Bishopsgate from London with Shelley, “he pointed out to me, more than once, a gloomy brick-house, as being this school. He spoke of the master, Dr. Greenlaw, not without respect, saying ‘he was a hard-headed Scotchman, and a man of rather liberal opinions.’ Of this period of his life he never gave me an account.”

<sup>2</sup> Medwin.

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a favourable impression on Medwin as on his school-fellow, Sir John Rennie, the engineer, who included a brief account of his schooldays in his autobiography. It was not a "Do-the-boys Hall," but the unappetising food provided at Syon House school was prepared and distributed with true Scotch frugality to the pupils, who were mostly the sons of London shopkeepers of rude habits and coarse manners. To Shelley the school was a perfect hell, where he "passed as a strange unsociable being";<sup>1</sup> his slender figure, girlish gestures, and his lack of interest in the games of the other boys singled him out as "fair sport" or a butt. Although fagging as it is practised at our large public schools was not in vogue at Dr. Greenlaw's academy, there was enough petty tyranny to render Shelley's life at times unbearable. When maddened by the persecution of his schoolfellows he would give way to furious paroxysms of rage, and seize any object at hand, even a small boy, to hurl at his tormentors. He knew, however, how to play a joke on his schoolfellows, as the following story shows. A boy<sup>2</sup> in a class below Shelley was one day trying to compose a Latin nonsense verse to be written down for the scanning, when Shelley came along and asked what he was doing. On being

<sup>1</sup> Medwin.

<sup>2</sup> The late Mr. W. C. Gellibrand, who died in his ninety-third year on April 20, 1884. The story was contributed, in Mr. Gellibrand's words, to the *Athenæum* for May 3, 1884, by Mr. Augustine Birrell.



*Drawn by D. Collins*

SYON PARK HOUSE, ISLEWORTH  
FORMERLY SYON HOUSE ACADEMY



## Schooldays

informed he said, "Give me your slate and I will do it for you." The boy went off to play, and when he returned he had hardly time to look at what Shelley had written on the slate, much less copy it afresh, so he handed it to the master, who called him up and asked if he had written the verse. The lad foolishly replied "yes," whereupon he was asked to construe it, and to his horror he found that it ran :

*"Hos ego versiculos scripsi, sed non ego feci."*

The boy was duly flogged, but he afterwards had the satisfaction of giving Shelley a pommelling. The narrator of this story said that Shelley looked like a girl in boy's clothes, and that he fought with open hands. He used to roll on the floor when flogged, not from the pain, but from a sense of indignity.

Shelley was, however, capable of great warmth of friendship for those whom he liked, and, "if treated with kindness, he was very amiable, noble, high-spirited and generous."<sup>1</sup> Among his papers after his death was found the following fragment, which is said to have been written not long before that event. It will find an appropriate place here, when speaking of the friendship that he formed at Syon House, to which period of his schooldays it probably relates,

<sup>1</sup> Rennie.

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as he mentions that his age was about eleven or twelve :

“ I once had a friend whom an inextricable multitude of circumstances has forced me to treat with apparent neglect. To him I dedicate this essay. If he finds my own words condemn me, will he not forgive ?

“ The nature of love and friendship is very little understood, and the distinctions between them ill-established. This latter feeling—at least, a profound and sentimental attachment to one of the same sex, often precedes the former. It is not right to say, merely, that friendship is exempt from the smallest alloy of sensuality. It rejects, with disdain, all thoughts but those of an elevated and imaginative character. I remember forming an attachment of this kind at school. I cannot recall to my memory the precise epoch at which this took place ; but I imagine it must have been at the age of eleven or twelve.

“ The object of these sentiments was a boy about my own age, of a character eminently generous, brave and gentle ; and the elements of human feeling seemed to have been, from his birth, genially compounded within him. There was a delicacy and a simplicity in his manners, inexpressibly attractive. It has never been my fortune to meet with him since my schoolboy days ; but either I confound my present recollections with the delusions of past feelings, or he is now a source of honour and utility to every one around him. The tones of his voice were so soft and winning, that every word pierced into my heart ; and their pathos was so

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deep, that in listening to him the tears have involuntarily gushed from my eyes. Such was the being for whom I first experienced the sacred sentiments of friendship. I remember in my simplicity writing to my mother a long account of his admirable qualities and my own devoted attachment. I suppose she thought me out of my wits, for she returned no answer to my letter. I remember we used to walk the whole play-hours up and down by some moss-covered palings, pouring out our hearts in youthful talk. We used to speak of the ladies, with whom we were in love, and I remember that our usual practice was to confirm each other in the everlasting fidelity, in which we had bound ourselves towards them, and towards each other. I recollect thinking my friend exquisitely beautiful. Every night, when we parted to go to bed, we kissed each other like children, as we still were ! ”

The name of Shelley's friend is not known ; he could hardly have been Medwin, who was Shelley's senior by some four years, although he tells us that he was the only one in the school with whom Shelley could communicate his sufferings or exchange ideas.

On holidays, when the other boys were playing within the narrow limits of the playground, Shelley would pace backwards and forwards with Medwin along the southern wall, indulging in various vague and undefined ideas, and pour out his sorrows to his friend, “ with observations far beyond his years, which according to his after ideas seem to have sprung from

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an ante-natal life." In other words we may suppose that he talked above the head of Tom Medwin. The familiar passage in the dedication to "The Revolt of Islam," in which Shelley recalls a resolution of his schooldays, seems to relate to Syon House rather than to Eton, where there was no grass.

"Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear Friend, when first  
The clouds which wrap this world from youth did pass.  
I do remember well the hour which burst  
My spirit's sleep : a fresh May-dawn it was,  
When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,  
And wept, I knew not why : until there rose,  
From the near schoolroom, voices, that alas !  
Were but one echo from a world of woes—  
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

And then I clasped my hands and looked around—  
—But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,  
Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground—  
So without shame, I spoke : ' I will be wise,  
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies  
Such power, for I grow weary to behold  
The selfish and the strong still tyrannise  
Without reproach or check.' I then controlled  
My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

And from that hour did I with earnest thought  
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore,  
Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught  
I cared to learn, but from that secret store  
Wrought linked armour for my soul, before

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It might walk forth to war among mankind ;  
Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more  
Within me, till there came upon my mind  
A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined."

The set tasks of the school gave Shelley no trouble ; with a memory so tenacious that he never forgot a word after once having turned it up in his dictionary, he soon outstripped his classmates. " He was fond of reading," says Medwin, " and he greedily devoured all the books which were brought to the school after the holidays ; these were mostly *blue* books. Who does not know what blue books mean ? but if there should be any ignorant enough not to know what those darling volumes, so designated from their covers, contain, be it known, that they were bought for sixpence, and embodied stories of haunted castles, bandits, murderers, and other grim personages—a most exciting and interesting sort of food for boys' minds ; among those of larger calibre was one which I have never seen since, but I still remember with a *recherché* delight. It was *Peter Wilkins*. How much Shelley wished for a winged wife and little winged cherubs of children ! " The Minerva Press of Lane<sup>1</sup> in Leadenhall Street was

<sup>1</sup> " Lane made a large fortune by the immense quantity of trashy novels which he sent forth from his Minerva Press. I perfectly remember the splendid carriage in which he used to ride, and his footmen with their cockades and gold-headed canes " (*Recollections of the Table-talk of Samuel Rogers*, 1856, p. 138).

Hughes of Ludgate Street, and Lee of Half-Moon Street, Bishopsgate,

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one of the chief purveyors of this class of literature.

When this stock was exhausted, Shelley would haunt the circulating library of Mr. P. Norbury in Brentford High Street. This enterprising librarian also carried on the business of a printer and publisher of the same kind of extravagant fiction to which Shelley was addicted. In an advertisement at the end of W. Helme's *Evenings Rationally Employed*, which he issued in 1803, he announced his intention of publishing *The Watch Tower ; or, The Sons of Ulthona*, an historical romance in 5 vols. by T. J. Horsley Curteis, author of *Ethelwina*, *Ancient Records*, and *The Scottish Legend* ; also *Murray House*, in 3 vols., by Mrs. Parsons, author of *The Mysterious Visit*, *The Peasant of Ardenne Forest*, *The Miser and his Family*, &c.

The actual shop of Norbury is now occupied by the stationery and printing works of Mr. Stutters, and is still much in the same condition as in Shelley's time. Mr. Fred Turner, who looked at a few of the books that were in circulation at the library, found nothing

were other publishers of the same class who in the early years of the nineteenth century issued sixpenny books with the following titles: "*The Midnight Groan ; or, the Spectre of the Chapel : involving an Exposure of the Horrible Secrets of the Nocturnal Assembly : a Gothic Romance*" ; "*Florian de Videmont, Chieftain of the Blue Castle ; or, Lorenzo the Starving Prisoner, and the Saviour of Almagro and his two Daughters from the Horrors of the Red Chamber*" ; "*Lucretia ; or, the Robbers of the Hyrcanean Forest*" ; "*Algehira ; or, Mystic Captives : a romantic Fragment.*"

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specially indicative of Shelley's literary predilections. Apart from "blue books," the volumes that most delighted Shelley at this time were the romances of Anne Radcliffe, "Monk" Lewis, and Charlotte Dacre, better known as "Rosa Matilda," whose *Zofloya; or, The Moor* (the last named was published after Shelley left Brentford), is especially named as a favourite by Medwin, upon which he is said by the same authority to have based his two novels—*Zastrozzi*, and *St. Irvyne; or, The Rosicrucian*.

It is hardly surprising that, after supping on the horrors of the Minerva Press, he should have been subject to strange and sometimes frightful dreams. Medwin did not sleep in Shelley's dormitory, but he said that he could never forget seeing him walk into his room one moonlight night. His eyes were open and he advanced with slow steps towards the open window; the sleep-walker was waked by his arm being seized by Medwin, who led him back with difficulty to his bed, but it was some time before his disquietude was allayed.

During Shelley's second or third year at Syon House, Adam Walker, the self-taught natural philosopher, was summoned to the school to deliver a course of lectures on Astronomy to the boys in the great room of the Academy, and he displayed his Orrery.

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Walker had spent many years in lecturing, and among the public schools that he had visited were Eton and Winchester. The pursuits of his varied career had ranged from an ushership in a school at the age of fifteen, to that of a hermit on one of the islands on Winandermere. He had engaged in trade, and was responsible for some inventions, but lecturing was the occupation that he found most profitable.<sup>1</sup>

Astronomy proved an entirely new sphere to Shelley, and Walker's lectures opened to him a fresh field for his speculations; the idea of a plurality of worlds especially delighted him. Walker's lectures concluded with a demonstration of the powers of the solar microscope, which excited Shelley's curiosity, though not to the same extent as the lectures on Astronomy. In after years Shelley became the possessor of a microscope, which Hogg relates he pawned in London in order to alleviate the distress of an old man. He afterwards recovered this instrument

<sup>1</sup> Some idea of the lectures to which Shelley was an attentive listener may be gathered from Walker's publications. That they were sufficiently comprehensive is shown by the title-page of the "*Analysis of a Course of Lectures on Natural and Experimental Philosophy*, viz. Magnetism, Mechanics, Chemistry, Pneumatics, Hydrostatics, Electricity, Fortification Optics, use of the Globes, &c., Astronomy, by A. Walker, M.D.S., Lecturer on Philosophy to His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester; *Eton and Winchester Colleges, &c.*" This little book, which contains a mass of information more or less correct, went through many editions. Of the planets he says, "Who can doubt therefore but they are inhabited, as well as all the worlds of the other system? How much too big is this idea for the human imagination!"

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and retained it for several years, long after he had parted with all the rest of his philosophical apparatus.

“If Shelley abominated one task more than another,” says Medwin,<sup>1</sup> “it was a dancing lesson. At a ball at Willis’s rooms, where, among other pupils of Sala, I made one, an aunt of mine asked the dancing-master why Bysshe was not present, to which he replied in his broken English : ‘ Mon Dieu, madam, what should he do here ? Master Shelley will not learn any ting—he is so *gauche*.’ In fact, he continued to abscond as often as possible from the dancing lessons, and, when forced to attend, suffered inexpressibly.”

The Rev. C. H. Grove, in recalling some recollections of his cousin, says : “The first time I saw Bysshe was when (I was) at Harrow—I nine years old ; my brother George, ten. We took him up at Brentford, where he was at school, at Dr. Greenlaw’s, a servant of my father’s taking care of us all. He accompanied us to Town, and spent the Easter holidays there. The only circumstance I can recollect to mention in connection with that visit was, that Bysshe, who was some few years older than we were, thought it would be good service to play carpenters, and, under his auspices, we got carpenter’s axes, and cut down some of my father’s young fir-trees in the park :

<sup>1</sup> Medwin, i. 28.

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my father often used to remind me of that circumstance.”<sup>1</sup> This happened when Shelley was twelve, in 1804, the year when he left Syon House School.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. H. C. Grove's letter, dated February 16, 1857, to Miss Hellen Shelley, from Professor Dowden's corrected copy of Hogg's *Life of Shelley*. It is noticeable that Hogg prints Ferne (Mr. T. Grove's Wiltshire seat) instead of Town.

## CHAPTER IV

### ETON

Shelley goes to Eton—Dr. Goodall—Dr. John Keate—" Botch " Bethell—" Ye ancient Spires "—Gronow's recollections of Shelley—Shelley's friends—Charles William Packe and Walter Halliday—" Mad Shelley "—" A Shelley-bait "—His storms of passion—Fagging—His fight—Chemistry and witchcraft—Dr. Lind—His studies and appearance—Lord Monson's recollections.

IN the year 1804 Shelley left Syon House School for Eton, but for him it was hardly a change for the better. Instead of sixty schoolfellows, he found himself among five hundred boys, and a corresponding increase in the number of his tormentors. He signed his name on 29th July in the books of the head-master, Dr. Goodall, a courteous, dignified, bewigged gentleman, and a scholar, but one who lacked the sterner qualities of the disciplinarian.

The lower school was ruled during most of Shelley's time with firmer hands than those of the mild Dr. Goodall, by Dr. John Keate, who succeeded to the head-mastership in 1809. Short and thickset, Keate was " little more (if more at all) than five feet in height, and not very great in girth, but in this space was concentrated the pluck of ten battalions."<sup>1</sup> As a

<sup>1</sup> Kinglake's *Eothen*, ch. xviii.

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young man he had been a resolute fighter, as an older man he was "tremendously fierce."<sup>1</sup>

"The very sight of the cocked hat he always wore, placed frontways on his head like that of Napoleon, struck terror in the hearts of all offenders."<sup>2</sup> His dress was grotesque, and the flowing black gown on his squat figure suggested a little widow-woman. Dr. Keate's face was of a ruddy hue ; his red, shaggy eyebrows were very prominent, and he had the peculiar knack of using them for the purpose of pointing out any object towards which he wished to direct attention. The rest of his features, which were strikingly original, and easily lent themselves to caricature, resembled those of a bull-dog ; indeed it was believed in the school that he possessed the bull-dog's power of pinning a bull with his teeth. His stentorian voice he could modulate with skill, "but he also had the power of quacking like an angry duck in order to inspire respect" :<sup>3</sup> his habitual severity he judged as fitting for a head-master.

Keate was the embodiment of honour and rectitude, an excellent scholar, and famed for his Latin verse. On succeeding to the head-mastership on Dr. Goodall's becoming Provost, he at once took steps

<sup>1</sup> Kinglake's *Eöthen*, ch. xviii.

<sup>2</sup> Gronow's *Recollections*.

<sup>3</sup> Kinglake's *Eöthen*, ch. xviii.

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to introduce very severe measures in dealing with the slackness prevalent in the school during his predecessor's *régime*, and for some time his efforts were met with the most determined opposition on the part of the boys. As a disciplinarian Keate showed no moderation in the use of the rod, having on one memorable occasion flogged eighty boys into submission, a task that occupied him till past midnight. Despite his blustering manner, Keate is said to have been not altogether devoid of kindness, and he was, on the whole, a popular head-master, but his rough and despotic character could hardly have appeared otherwise than brutal to a boy of Shelley's nature.

Shelley first lodged at the house of Mr. Hexter, an Eton writing-master and a "dame." He afterwards boarded at the house of the Rev. George Bethell,<sup>1</sup> a good-humoured, noisy, jolly-looking old fellow ; but regarded as the dullest man in the school. "Botch" Bethell, as they nicknamed him on account of the dreadful botches that he made in altering the boys' verses, was remembered for his verbose sermons, and

<sup>1</sup> "This Mr. Bethell was, to boys, famous for inefficiency as a classical teacher ; but he was a true gentleman, a cadet of a good Yorkshire family ; he was known *to men* as a modest but steadfast vindicator of 'the statutable rights of scholars' of Eton College against the iniquitous usurpations of the Provost and Fellows. He was a just and also a courteous man" (William Cory, in *The Notebook of the Shelley Society*, 1888, p. 15, Part i.).

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his fatuous comments on the boys' tasks by the following couplet in which he was ridiculed :

“ Didactic, dry, declamatory, dull,  
Big, blustering Bethell bellows like a bull.”

On entering this school, says Dowden, Shelley was placed in the upper fourth form ; in 1805 he was in the remove ; in 1808 in the upper fifth ; and when leaving, in 1810, in the sixth form.

Bethell's house, which was taken down in 1863, “ was,” says William Cory,<sup>1</sup> “ next door to a shop well known fifty years back—a shop kept by some elderly women called Spire or Spires. At the end of the village of Eton in which the schoolboys lived, there was at the same time a shop kept by people named Towers. I dare say Shelley may, like me, have heard Gray's line quoted thus : ‘ Ye ancient Spires, ye distant Towers.’ ” Shelley did not forget Spires, if Gronow is to be trusted, for, in his Recollections, when describing how he came across Shelley for the last time on the seashore at Genoa in 1822, “ the poet was making a true poet's meal of bread and fruit. He at once recognised me, jumped up, and appearing greatly delighted, exclaimed, ‘ Here you see me at my old Eton habits, but instead of the green fields for a couch I have the shores of the Mediterranean.

<sup>1</sup> *The Notebook of the Shelley Society*, 1888, p. 15, Part i.

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It is very grand, and very romantic. I only wish I had some of the excellent brown bread and butter we used to get at Spires'; but I was never very fastidious in my diet.' Then he continued in a wild and eccentric manner: 'Gronow, do you remember the beautiful Martha, the Hebe of Spires's? She was the loveliest girl I ever saw, and I loved her to distraction.'"<sup>1</sup> While Gronow sat by Shelley's side "he asked many questions about myself and many of our schoolfellows"; which shows that he did remember his friends at Eton, although the contrary has been asserted.

The practice at Eton of making indiscriminate presents of handsomely bound books among classmates on leaving the school was in vogue in Shelley's time, and he possessed at Oxford an unusual number of such books, Greek and Latin classics, each inscribed with the name of the donor. Hogg says that these volumes were a proof of Shelley's popularity with his schoolfellows, and many of them "who were at Oxford frequently called at his rooms, but he did not encourage their visits as they interrupted his favourite studies."<sup>2</sup>

Although Shelley did not care to share the amuse-

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences and Recollections of Captain Gronow*, vol. i. p. 155, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 124.

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ments of other boys, preferring to wander alone, generally with a book, for the hour together, he made some close friends. He could not, however, have been a popular boy, for according to Mrs. Shelley "he was disliked by the masters, and hated by his superiors in age, but he was adored by his equals. He was all passion—passionate in his resistance to injury, passionate in his love. Kindness could win his own soul, and the idea of self never for a moment tarnished the purity of his sentiments."

These friendships were in after years remembered both by himself and by his companions. Edward Leslie, afterwards Rector of Dromore, possessed several volumes presented to him at Eton, each inscribed with his name "from his affectionate friend, Percy Bysshe Shelley." Mr. Leslie's son, the Rev. Robert J. Leslie of Holbeach, informed Professor Dowden<sup>1</sup> that he supposed his father was "Shelley's best and dearest friend; the one that appreciated his genius more than any other boy except Charles Ball . . . they were in the same house, as were also Ball and Lord Howe." Shelley and Leslie were generally credited with putting a bull-dog into Dr. Keate's desk, but another boy afterwards assumed the sole responsibility for this prank. Mr. Leslie related that Shelley used to compose poems and dramas, which

<sup>1</sup> Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 26.

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the boys, with a display of mock interest, would invite him to rehearse, and that when he thought his audience was enraptured they would burst into laughter. The trick was frequently played on him, but he could easily be persuaded to incur its repetition. Leslie often tried to console him, and his son "heard him speak with tears of 'Poor dear Shelley! it was no wonder that he went wrong.'" Andrew Amos, who became an eminent lawyer and a county court judge, boarded at Hexter's with Shelley; he remembered composing plays with him and acting them before the lower boys.

Charles William Packe was a pupil of Bethell's and in 1808 sat near Shelley in school. He was afterwards M.P. for South Leicestershire, and Colonel of the Leicestershire Yeomanry. Among other recollections of his friend, he says: "Shelley was too peculiar in his genius and his habits to be 'the hare with many friends'; but the few who knew him loved him, and, if I may judge from myself, remember with affectionate regret that his schooldays were more adventurous than happy."

Gronow tells us that Shelley was his friend and associate at Eton, but he may not have known him very intimately as he was Shelley's junior by two years. He describes him, however, as a "boy of studious and meditative habits, averse to all games

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and sports, and a great reader of novels and romances. He was a thin, slight lad, with remarkably lustrous eyes, fine hair, and a very peculiar shrill voice and laugh." Gronow adds that Shelley's "most intimate friend at Eton was a boy named Price, who was considered one of the best classical scholars amongst us."

One of Shelley's closest friends was Walter S. Halliday, who embodied some recollections of him in a charming letter printed by Hogg.<sup>1</sup> He said that he loved Shelley for his kindliness and affectionate ways, and added that "he was not made to endure the rough and boisterous pastime at Eton, and his shy gentle nature was glad to escape far away to muse over strange fancies, for his mind was reflective and teeming with deep thought." Shelley's love of nature was intense, and not caring for the games of the school he was glad of any opportunity to escape and wander for hours with Halliday about Clewer, Frogmore, the Park at Windsor, Stoke Park, and Gray's churchyard, while he related "his marvellous stories of fairyland, of apparitions, spirits, and haunted ground, and his speculations were then (for his mind was far more developed than mine) of the world beyond the grave."

Halliday, however, was mistaken when he stated

<sup>1</sup> Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 43.

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that his friend never went out in a boat on the river. Shelley informed Medwin that the greatest delight he experienced at Eton was the boating. And Medwin himself had been present at a regatta in 1809 at Eton, when Shelley assisted and seemed to enjoy it. But his love of the Thames began at Brentford where he more than once played the truant with Medwin and rowed to Kew, and once to Richmond, to see Mrs. Jordan in *The Country Girl*, at the theatre there, the first he ever visited. Allowances being made for the fact that one's schooldays are generally more agreeable when viewed in retrospect, he recalled with evident pleasure, in 1821, the summer evenings at Eton spent on the river, in his poem "The Boat on the Serchio" :

. . . "Those bottles of warm tea—  
(Give me some straw)--must be stowed tenderly ;  
Such as we used, in summer after six,  
To cram in great-coat pockets, and to mix  
Hard eggs and radishes and rolls at Eton,  
And, couched on stolen hay in those green harbours  
Farmers call 'gaps,' and we school-boys called 'arbours,'  
Would feast till eight."

Mr. Henry Wagner, whose father was at Eton, and of Shelley's age, told me he had heard him relate that the nickname "Mad Shelley" was generally known in the school. It was perhaps owing to this epithet that he and other boys avoided Shelley. At Eton he was also called "Shelley the atheist," which, according

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to Hogg, was used in the classical sense meaning Antitheist, an opposer and contemner of the gods, and not one who denies their existence. "At Eton," he says, "but at no other school that I ever heard of, they had the name and office of atheist; but this usually was not full, it demanded extraordinary daring to attain to it; it was commonly in commission, as it were, and the youths of the greatest hardihood might be considered as boys commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Atheist." <sup>1</sup>

Shelley's eccentric habits, the odd carelessness of his dress, and his indifference to the school sports, made him a conspicuous figure, and the boys soon found out that much amusement could be devised by goading him into a rage. Professor Dowden has described what was known as a Shelley-bait, in which the unfortunate lad was surrounded by a jeering throng of boys, and reduced to a state of frenzy by his tormentors, who would disperse when his pent-up passion burst in all its fury.

Sir John Taylor Coleridge was of Shelley's standing at Eton: he afterwards became a judge, and was at one time a contributor to, and later editor of, the *Quarterly Review*, in which periodical he "cut up" Shelley's "Revolt of Islam" in the most merciless manner. "Coleridge," relates William Cory, "used to say that

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 137.

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he never joined in teasing Shelley, but he did not know anyone else that did not tease him : there used to be a 'Shelley-bait' every day about noon : the boys hunted Shelley up the street : he was known for not wearing strings to his shoes. I believe that boys suffer more from mortification than from rough usage, and that a life may be poisoned by insulting notice taken of deficiencies of dress. I consider the shoe-strings in this case not to have been trifles."<sup>1</sup>

Another writer whose recollections of Sir John Coleridge deserve attention gives a different version of his attitude to Shelley. Mr. Stephen Coleridge says : "My two grandfathers were at Eton together, and I have at different times heard each of them speak of Shelley, who was there at the same time. My grandfather, the Judge, like other boys, had not much sympathy for the eccentricities of genius at that age, and I am afraid he did not exert himself to prevent a diversion known as a 'Shelley-hunt,' in which the poet was chivied about, and any handy missile thrown at him. My other grandfather, my mother's father, Mr. Seymour, once told me that he was some way from Eton up the river one day, and came upon Shelley, who had been out duck-spearing, but that the poet had somehow speared his own leg instead of any duck, and was lying quite helpless, unable to walk.

<sup>1</sup> *The Shelley Notebook*, p. 14 (Shelley Society's publications).

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Whereupon my grandfather hoisted him upon his back and carried him all the way back to school." <sup>1</sup> •

Shelley used to relate the story of stabbing an upper boy with a fork, "as an almost involuntary act, done on the spur of anguish, and he made the stab as the boy was going out of the room." <sup>2</sup> But Shelley's storms of passion, though dangerous while they lasted, were invariably due to some aggravation, and they were not of long duration. He would frequently show his sympathy for the younger boys by assisting a dullard with his tasks. Shelley was the very opposite to a bully, he was hot-tempered but far from ill-tempered, his friends all testified to his generous and open-hearted nature.

It has been stated that Shelley stood alone at Eton, but, when he attempted the bold task of resisting the fagging system, it is hardly to be wondered at. From the boys in the upper forms, who were fagmasters, he naturally got no support, and his own classmates and juniors were not courageous enough to join him. There seems to be a considerable doubt if he really tried to abolish fagging, but he rebelled single-handed at what he regarded as a tyranny and refused to obey his fagmaster. <sup>3</sup> To defy such a deeply rooted custom

<sup>1</sup> From *Memories*, by the Hon. Stephen Coleridge. (John Lane, 1913.)

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Shelley to Leigh Hunt, April 8, 1825.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Matthews, who afterwards became a judge, was author of *The Diary of an Invalid*—a popular book of travel in its day.

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of the school denoted considerable pluck. Halliday said, when perhaps bearing in mind Shelley's attitude towards fagging, that he "had great moral courage, and feared nothing but what was base and low."

It is not perhaps possible to place reliance on all of the stories told of Shelley's schooldays, though many of them seem to be well attested.

Much as the poet disliked fighting for fighting's sake, Captain Gronow stated in his *Recollections* that Shelley once engaged in a fight at Eton against Sir Thomas Styles. Gronow could not recollect what cause induced Shelley to enter the ring, but he witnessed the contest, and stated that the combatants met in the playing-fields, and that a ring was formed with seconds and bottle-holders. The tall, lank figure of the poet towered above the thickset little baronet, and Shelley's confidence increased after a successful round. He then "spouted in Greek one of the defiant addresses usual with Homer's heroes when about to commence single combat, to the no small amusement of the boys," whereupon Styles went to work in earnest and soon knocked out his opponent, who, in defiance of the rules, broke through the ring and escaped.

Shelley did not venture again to enter the pugilistic arena, but passed much of his leisure in the study

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of the occult sciences, natural philosophy, and chemistry; his pocket money was spent on books "relative to these pursuits, on chemical apparatus and materials," and many of the books treated of magic and witchcraft. In his second letter to Godwin, in which he related the chief events of his boyhood, he said: "Ancient books of Chemistry and magic were perused with an enthusiasm of wonder, almost amounting to belief. My sentiments were unrestrained by anything within me; external impediments were numerous and strongly applied; their effect was merely temporary." He would watch the livelong nights for ghosts, and while at home he had endeavoured to obtain admission to the vaults of Warnham Church, where he might sit all night in expectation of seeing one. At Eton he consulted books on the grim subject of raising a ghost, and once at midnight he stole from the Dame's house with the object of putting his knowledge to the test. He took with him a skull—the prescribed implement for an incantation—and crossing a field, among the long grass, was alarmed to hear it rustle as if the evil one followed behind him. His fears somewhat abated when he had passed over the field, as he could no longer hear the pursuer. At length he reached a small stream, when he stood with one foot on either side of it, and repeated an incantation and drank thrice from the skull, but no ghost appeared,

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probably because he had failed to repeat the correct formula of the charm.<sup>1</sup>

He recalled these pursuits in his "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" in the often quoted lines :

" While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped  
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,  
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing  
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.  
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed :  
I was not heard : I saw them not :  
When musing deeply on the lot  
Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing  
All vital things that wake to bring  
News of birds and blossoming,  
Sudden thy shadow fell on me :  
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy :  
I vowed that I would dedicate my powers  
To thee and thine : have I not kept the vow ?  
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now  
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours  
Each from his voiceless grave. . . ."

' The study of physical science apparently was discouraged at Eton in Shelley's days, for in a note that Timothy Shelley wrote to Medwin senior (from whom Shelley had borrowed a volume) he said : " I have returned the book on chemistry as it is a forbidden thing at Eton." <sup>2</sup> Chemical experiments were certainly pro-

<sup>1</sup> Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. pp. 33-34.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Hellen Shelley recollected seeing her brother's face and hands burned and blackened by some badly managed experiment, probably at Eton, with *lunar caustic*. The white frocks of his sisters, in some mysterious manner, were found stained with black marks, the result, no doubt, of frequent visits to the Hall Chamber, Bysshe's room at Field Place.

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hibited in the boys' rooms, but one day when Shelley was engaged in the production of "a blue flame" his tutor, Bethell, caught him in the act and angrily asked him what he was doing. Shelley jocularly replied that he was "raising the devil." Mr. Bethell seized hold of a mysterious implement on the table, and in an instant was thrown against the wall, having grasped a highly charged electrical machine. Of course, the young experimentalist paid dearly for this unfortunate occurrence."<sup>1</sup> William Cory, who gives a variation of this legend in his paper "Shelley at Eton," tells us that Shelley was "amusing his companions with a frictional electric machine in his own room, and charging the door handle failed in his dutiful attempt to warn his tutor, Mr. Bethell, against opening the door when he came to stop the noise caused by the electric shocks."<sup>2</sup>

On one occasion he is said to have set fire to a tree by means of gunpowder and a burning-glass,<sup>3</sup> and at

<sup>1</sup> *Shelley Memorials*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> "Shelley at Eton," *Shelley Society's Notebook*, 1886, Pt. i. p. 14. Medwin mentions that Bysshe, who as a boy was fond of flying kites at Field Place, made an electrical one, borrowing the idea from Franklin, with the object of drawing lightning from the clouds.

<sup>3</sup> William Cory (*ibid.*) states that one day when he was in South Meadow—a field adjoining the well-known Brocas, and used in winter for football and hurdle races by the Eton boys—with Mr. Edward Coleridge (brother of Sir John Coleridge), he pointed out to him a wretched pollard willow with only half a trunk and black inside, and said, "This is the tree that Shelley blew up with gunpowder: that was his last bit of naughtiness at school."

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another time he employed a travelling tinker to assist him in constructing a steam engine, which, however, burst, and very nearly blew him and the unfortunate Mr. Bethell and his family into the air. Besides Shelley's love of experimental chemistry and electricity, his interest in astronomy was again aroused by Adam Walker, who came on a lecturing visit to Eton. Shelley once more turned his eyes to the heavens, and, in the words of one of his schoolfellows, "night was his jubilee."<sup>1</sup>

But he probably received some solid assistance and encouragement in his studies in chemistry and astronomy, and his Eton days were brightened by the friendship of Dr. James Lind. When Shelley met him this amiable old man was well past seventy; he had been settled for many years at Windsor as physician to the Royal household, and was devoted to the King.<sup>2</sup> He was an eccentric character—as thin as a lath. He had travelled in China, the Hebrides and Iceland, and possessed a collection of Indian and other curiosities picked up on his travels. Miss Burney described him, in her diary of 1785, as too fond of tricks, conundrums, and queer things to maintain the confidence

<sup>1</sup> Dowden, i. p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Hogg believed that Shelley had learnt to curse the King and his father from Dr. Lind, but he appears to have been convinced subsequently that Shelley had hoaxed him, and that he intended to expunge the statement from his book in a second edition. See Dowden, i. pp. 32-33.

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of his patients, but Shelley held him in the highest estimation and never mentioned his name except in terms of the tenderest respect. He regarded him as "exactly what an old man should be, free, calm-spirited, full of benevolence and even of youthful ardour; his eyes seemed to burn with supernatural spirit beneath his brow, shaded by his venerable locks; he was tall, vigorous and healthy in his body; tempered, as it had ever been, by his amiable mind. I owe to that man far, ah! far more than I owe to my father; he loved me, and I shall never forget our long talks where he breathed the spirit of the kindest tolerance and the finest wisdom."

Shelley used to relate how, when he was recovering from a severe fever at Field Place during the holidays, he was warned by a servant that his father had been overheard while consulting about sending him to a private madhouse.<sup>1</sup> Being master of three pounds, with the servants' help he contrived to send for Dr. Lind. "He came," says Shelley, "and I shall never forget his manner on that occasion. His profession gave him authority; his love for me ardour. He dared my father to execute his purpose, and his menaces had the desired effect." The story was told by Mrs. Shelley, in what she declared were Shelley's

<sup>1</sup> This story is related by Medwin in his *Life of Shelley*, also in *The Diary of Polidori*, though not so circumstantially.

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own words, spoken to her on the night that decided her destiny, and Hogg had heard him speak more than once of the incident, but he believed that Shelley's "recollections were those of a person not quite recovered from a fever which attacked his brain, and still disturbed by the horrors of the disease." Dr. Lind died at the age of seventy-six in 1812, the year after Shelley left Oxford, but he never forgot his old friend, and had him in his mind when he described in "The Revolt of Islam" the hermit who released Laon from prison in Cantos iii. and iv., as he believed he had been delivered by Dr. Lind from pressing danger during his illness at Field Place.

He was "an old man . . . stately and beautiful," he says, who

". . . had spent his livelong age  
In converse with the dead, who leave the stamp  
Of ever-burning thoughts on many a page,  
When they are gone into the senseless damp  
Of graves ;—his spirit thus became a lamp  
Of splendour, like to those on which it fed :  
Through peopled haunts, the City and the Camp,  
Deep thirst for knowledge had his footsteps led,  
And all the ways of men among mankind he read,"

—and Dr. Lind was also the "original" of Zonoras, the aged instructor of Prince Athanase, his

". . . one beloved friend,  
An old, old man, with hair of silver white  
And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend  
With his wise words ; and eyes whose arrowy light

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Shone like the reflex of a thousand minds.  
He was the last whom superstition's blight  
Had spared in Greece. . . ."

Shelley's studies at Eton were chiefly of his own choosing. His friend Halliday tells us that "his lessons were child's play to him, and his powers of versification remarkable, although the making of Latin verse was not to his liking. He read Lucretius and was fascinated, and he translated several books of Pliny's *Natural History*, including the chapter "De Deo," which, according to Medwin, was "the first germ of his ideas respecting the Nature of God." It was his intention to make a complete version of this book, but he stopped short at the chapter on Astronomy, on learning from Dr. Lind that it baffled the best of scholars. In his second letter to Godwin, he told him that at Eton he made his first acquaintance with *Political Justice*. This book, which was destined to work such a potent influence on his life and character, he borrowed from Dr. Lind.<sup>1</sup>

Shelley's appearance, however, was not always one of unkempt carelessness, as some of the descriptions given above would lead us to suppose. We get a glimpse of him during these schooldays as he appeared to the eyes of his sister Hellen, who in her recollections of her brother says, that "he ordered clothes to his

<sup>1</sup> Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, ch. xvi.

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own fancy at Eton, and the beautifully fitting silk pantaloons, as he stood as almost all men and boys do, with their coat tails near the fire, excited my silent, though excessive admiration." And when he took part in the Montem processions of the years 1805 and 1809, he appeared in the former year as pole-bearer in the uniform of a midshipman, with a blue jacket, white trousers, silk stockings and pumps; on the second occasion he walked as full corporal, attended by his pole-bearers.

The following interesting reference to Shelley was written down in 1848 by Lord Monson: <sup>1</sup> "Among the more celebrated names at Eton in my time I have a slight recollection of Shelley. He was captain of the Oppidans, I think, in 1810—a fair lad, who, I think, boarded at Bethell's. I remember many odd freaks recorded of him. He bought a large brass cannon at an auction at Windsor, and harnessed many lower boys to draw it down into college. It was captured, I think, by one of the tutors, and kept till the holidays at Hexter's."

<sup>1</sup> "Reminiscences of Eton," by William John, sixth Lord Monson, *Nineteenth Century*, April 1909. It is hardly necessary to say that there is nothing to support Lord Monson's supposition that Shelley was captain of the Oppidans.

## CHAPTER V

### FIRST ATTEMPTS AT AUTHORSHIP

Shelley as a sportsman—Literary projects—*The School of Terror*—"The Wandering Jew"—Correspondence with Walter Scott—Gessner—The publication of *Zastrozzi*—Pouching the reviewers—*St. Irvyne*—Shelley's ignorance of German—The Newspaper Editor's reminiscences—Shelley goes up to Oxford—The Easter vacation—Harriet Grove—*Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*.

SHELLEY returned to Field Place in the December of 1809 for his Christmas vacation, and his companion was Medwin, who recalled in after years the walks that they took together on this occasion. Sir Timothy was a keen sportsman, and Shelley, who was himself an excellent shot, often carried a gun on his shoulder in his father's preserves. Medwin tells us an amazing story of Shelley "killing, at three successive shots, three snipe at the tail of the pond in front of Field Place." But the country gentleman's pleasure in killing was not deeply rooted in Shelley, and, long before he found it abhorrent,<sup>1</sup> he was content to let the game-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Alastor," lines 13-17:

"If no bright bird, insect or gentle beast  
I consciously have injured, but still loved  
And cherished these my kindred; then forgive  
This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw  
No portion of your wonted favour now!"

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keeper slay the birds (which were afterwards taken to his mother) while he sat immersed in his book. The statement, however, that Shelley was a good shot was undoubtedly true, and he was later fond of pistol practice and indulged in it as one of his favourite amusements at Oxford, Marlow, and in Italy.

Shelley's mind in the winter of 1809-10 was full of literary projects, and "he had," as Medwin tells us, "begun to have a longing for authorship—a dim presentiment of his future fame—an ambition of making a name in the world."<sup>1</sup> His earliest efforts proclaimed him "a romanticist." The Gothic movement which in the latter part of the eighteenth century had grown out of Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, Clara Reeve's *Old English Baron*, the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe, the metrical *Tales of Wonder* and other horrors of "Monk" Lewis, with a host of even more worthless imitations, still found favour with the reading public when Shelley was beginning to take an interest in reading. He was attracted by the work of *The School of Terror*, although its popularity was on the wane, for those who were tired of "Gothic horrors" were finding enjoyment in the gentle satire of Miss Austen<sup>2</sup> and Miss Edgeworth, and the romantic narrative poems of Walter Scott.

<sup>1</sup> Medwin, vol. i. p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Austen ridicules the taste of her day for *The School of Terror* in *Northanger Abbey*, ch. iv.:

"When you have finished *Udolpho*, we will read *The Italian* together;

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During Shelley's schooldays we have seen that he "was haunted with a possession of the wildest and most extravagant romances," and that much of his time was spent in wandering alone with the companionship of a book. "From a reader," he says, "I became a writer of romances; before the age of seventeen I had published two, *St. Irvyne* and *Zastrozzi*."<sup>1</sup> Medwin tells us that he wrote with him in the winter of 1809-10, in alternate chapters, the commencement of a wild, extraordinary romance, in which a hideous witch played a part. About the same time, Shelley projected and Medwin joined him in an ambitious literary undertaking, no less than a long narrative poem in the metre of Scott's popular metrical romances on the subject of "The Wandering Jew." Shelley or Medwin had "picked up, dirty and torn, in Lincoln's Inn Fields" a fragment of a translation of Schubart's poem "The Wandering Jew," a portion of the *German*

and I have made out a list of ten or twelve more of the same kind for you."

"I have you, indeed? How glad I am! What are they all?"

"I will read you their names directly; here they are in my pocket-book: *Castle of Wolfenbach*, *Clermont*, *Mysterious Warnings*, *Necromancer of the Black Forest*, *Midnight Bell*, *Orphan of the Rhine*, and *Horrid Mysteries*. These will last us some time."

"Yes, pretty well; but are they all horrid? Are you sure they are all horrid?"

"Yes, quite sure."

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's second letter to Godwin, January 10, 1812. The statement as to his age is incorrect, as he was apparently between seventeen and eighteen when he wrote *Zastrozzi*.

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*Museum*, 1802, vol. 3, and this story suggested the idea for the poem. Medwin, whose account of the transaction is far from convincing, claimed to have written almost entirely himself the first three cantos,<sup>1</sup> save a few additions and alterations. The vision in the third canto he confessed to have taken from Lewis's "Monk," and with equal candour he declared the Crucifixion scene to be a plagiarism from a volume of Cambridge prize poems.<sup>2</sup> "After seven or eight cantos were perpetrated, Shelley sent them to Campbell for his opinions on their merits with a view to publication. The author of *The Pleasures of Hope* returned the MS. with the remark that 'there were only two good lines in it,' namely :

"It seemed, as if some angel's sigh  
Had breathed the plaintive symphony."

"This criticism gave the death-blow to our hopes of immortality."<sup>3</sup> He does not tell us, and perhaps he was not aware, that Shelley sent the poem to the publishers of Walter Scott's poems, Ballantyne & Co., who replied on September 24, 1810, from Edinburgh :

"We are extremely sorry at length, after the most mature deliberation, to be under the necessity of

<sup>1</sup> In *The Shelley Papers*, 1833, Medwin says that he was responsible for the first four cantos, and that six or seven cantos were written.

<sup>2</sup> Probably the Seatonian poem for 1765 on the Crucifixion by Thomas Zouch. As Mr. Dobell points out, the Crucifixion scene in "The Wandering Jew" as we have it shows no evidence of plagiarism.

<sup>3</sup> Medwin, vol. i. p. 53.

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declining the honour of being the publishers of the present poem; not that we doubt its success,<sup>\*</sup> but that it is perhaps better suited to the character and liberal feelings of the English than the bigoted spirit which yet pervades many cultivated minds in this country. Even Walter Scott is assailed on all hands, at present, by our Scotch spiritual and evangelical magazines and instructors, for having promulgated atheistical doctrines in 'The Lady of the Lake.' "

It would be difficult to detect anything of a heterodox character in such a poem as "The Lady of the Lake," which was at that time selling in thousands, and for many years was a favourite prize in girls' schools; John Ballantyne, therefore, in declining to publish Shelley's poem, probably invented an excuse at the expense of his friend, Walter Scott.

Shelley made another attempt to find a publisher for "The Wandering Jew," and offered it in a letter dated September 28, 1810, to John Joseph Stockdale,<sup>1</sup> a publisher in Pall Mall, who made a business of issuing from his shop in Pall Mall volumes of minor poetry and romances, often, no doubt, at the authors' risk. There is nothing in Shelley's published letters to show what was Stockdale's decision, nor is there any evidence of its having appeared in book form. Four cantos of the poem, however, were printed in *The Edinburgh Literary Journal* for the year 1829, with

<sup>1</sup> John Stockdale.

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Shelley's preface dated January 1811, and his dedication: "To Sir Francis Burdett, Bart., M.P., in consideration of the active virtues by which both his public and private life is so eminently distinguished, the following poem is inscribed by the author." The editor of this periodical states that when Shelley visited Edinburgh in 1811 he brought the poem with him, and that the MS. had since been in the custody of a literary gentleman of that town to whom it was offered for publication. The MS. is more likely to have been that which he offered in 1810 (with the preface post-dated) in his letter quoted above to Ballantyne, who requested Shelley to advise him how to return it. The four cantos of "The Wandering Jew" were also published in *Fraser's Magazine*, three years after its appearance in *The Edinburgh Literary Journal* in 1831, as "an unpublished poem," with the sanction of Mrs. Shelley. This version of the poem, which varies considerably from that published in *The Edinburgh Literary Journal*, contains neither the dedication nor the preface, and must have been printed from another—possibly an earlier—copy, and perhaps the identical MS. which Shelley sent to Stockdale. The poem, on its appearance in *Fraser's Magazine*, was introduced by a long article from the pen of either W. Maginn, or Father Mahoney, under the initials O. Y. of the pseudonym, Oliver Yorke. Medwin printed in his *Life of Shelley*

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some portions of a preface which he tells us Shelley intended for the poem, but no portion of these extracts resembles the preface printed in *The Edinburgh Literary Journal*.

“The Wandering Jew” is excluded from more important editions of Shelley’s poetical works, owing to Medwin’s claim to have participated in its composition. I agree with Mr. Dobell<sup>1</sup> in the opinion that Shelley wrote, if not the whole of the poem as we now have it, considerably more than Medwin. It is more animated than Medwin’s acknowledged poems, and it was evidently composed with the same enthusiasm which enabled Shelley to produce his two novels. The poem, in fact, is not as Medwin says, “a sort of thing such as boys write,” but what one might have expected from the author of *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*. Shelley, moreover, acknowledged the poem as his, without reference to his alleged coadjutor, in offering it to Stockdale, and apparently he sent it as his own work to the firm of Ballantyne. In the preface as printed in *The Edinburgh Literary Journal* he uses the first-person singular, and the dedication quoted above is written in the third person and he uses the word “author.” Shelley also quoted passages

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bertram Dobell, who was the first to call attention to the publication of “The Wandering Jew” in *The Edinburgh Literary Journal*, edited an excellent edition of the poem, which was issued by the Shelley Society in 1887.

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from "The Wandering Jew" at the heads of two chapters of *St. Irvyne*. At the time of writing his *Life of Shelley*, Medwin tells us he had retained the MS. of his portion of the poem and that he could have identified easily Shelley's contributions, which he admits were far the better. Perhaps Medwin's chief part of the work consisted in supplying the material, while Shelley held the pen, or it may have been that Shelley dictated the poem to Medwin. If Shelley ceased to take an interest in the poem when he failed to induce either the Ballantynes or Stockdale to publish it, he returned to the subject of "The Wandering Jew" when writing "Queen Mab," and included the fragment by Schubart among the notes. In 1823, ten years after "Queen Mab" was printed, a poem by Medwin was published with the title of "Ahasuerus the Wanderer," but it is curious to observe that no influences of the earlier poem are discernible in this work.

Shelley was not at all diffident when he desired the opinion of anyone with whom he was personally unacquainted. He took the bold step of writing a letter without waiting for an introduction, a practice which he had learnt at Eton from Dr. Lind.<sup>1</sup> In this manner he addressed some letters to Felicia Dorothea Browne (afterwards Mrs. Hemans), whose juvenile poems, composed at the age of twelve, had appeared in 1808,

<sup>1</sup> Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 270.

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but her mother wrote to Medwin's father and begged him to use his influence with Shelley to stop the correspondence.<sup>1</sup> We have seen that he also wrote to Campbell for an opinion of his poem on "The Wandering Jew," and later to Byron, Moore, and Godwin. He probably wrote to other authors, but his letters, if they have survived, have not yet come to light. He addressed at least one letter to Walter Scott, whose most interesting reply is given in the last volume of the *Diary of Frances Lady Shelley*, edited by Mr. Richard Edgcumbe. Shelley had asked an opinion of his poetry. No date is printed with Scott's reply, but it evidently relates to an early period of Shelley's life, and probably before he went up to Oxford. The following are some of the most interesting passages :

"Sir,—I am honoured with your letter, which, in terms far too flattering for the proverbial vanity of an author, invites me to a task which in general I have made it a positive rule to decline, being repeated in so many shapes that, besides the risk of giving pain, it became a real encroachment upon the time which I must necessarily devote to very unpoetical labours. In your case, however, sir, a blunt refusal to give an opinion asked in so polite a manner, and with so many unnecessary apologies, would be rude and unhandsome.

<sup>1</sup> "I believe I mentioned to you the extraordinary letters with which I was once persecuted by (Mr. Shelley) ; he, with whom 'Queen Mab hath been'" (Mrs. Hemans, in a letter dated November 15, 1822). Medwin states that in later years she became an admirer of Shelley's poetry, and "in some measure" modelled her style after his."

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I have only to caution you against relying very much upon it. The friends who know me best, and to whose judgment I am myself in the constant habit of trusting, reckon me a very capricious and uncertain judge of poetry, and I have had repeated occasion to observe that I often failed in anticipating the reception of the poetry from the public."

Scott then goes on to give some very sound advice to his correspondent, and the following is characteristic :

" No good man can ever be happy when he is unfit for the career of simple and commonplace duty, and I need not add how many melancholy instances there are of extravagance and profligacy being resorted to, under the pretence of contempt for the common rules of life. Cultivate then, sir, your taste for poetry, and the belles-lettres, as an elegant and most interesting amusement, but combine it with studies of a more serious and solid cast, such as are most intimately connected with your prospects in future life, whatever those may be. In the words of Solomon, ' My son, get knowledge, and with all thy getting, get understanding.' . . . With respect to the idylls of which you have favoured me with copies, they seem to me to have all the merits, and most of the faults of juvenile compositions. They are fanciful, tender and elegant, and exhibit both command of language and luxuriance of imagination.

" On the other hand, they are a little too wordy, and there is too much the air to make the most of everything : too many epithets, and too laboured an attempt to describe minute circumstances. . . . Upon the whole, I think your specimen augurs very favourably of your talents, and that you have not any cause for

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the apprehensive dejection you have experienced, and which I confess I do not think the worst symptom of your powers. But I do not greatly admire your model. Gessner's 'Arcadia' is too ideal for my taste and sympathy, or perhaps I am too old to relish it. Besides, I dislike the measured prose, which has all the stiffness and pedantry of blank verse, without its rhythm and harmony. I think you have a greater chance of making more progress by chusing a more severe and classical model. But, above all, be in no hurry to publish. A name in poetry is soon lost, but it is very difficult to regain it." . . .

It would appear that a translation of Solomon Gessner's *Idylls* had fallen in Shelley's way, and that the specimens he had sent to Scott for his criticism were acknowledged to be imitations of the Swiss writer's "Death of Abel" and other works by the mediocre Gessner which were written in a kind of poetical prose, in their day very popular, not only in Switzerland and Germany, but in French and English translations. There is no work of this writer bearing the title of "Arcadia," and Scott seems to use the word in the sense of the Arcadian fancy of Gessner's *Idylls*.

It was during his last term at Eton, in April 1810, that Shelley experienced for the first time the pride of authorship, for early in that month his novel *Zastrozzi* was ushered into a not very sympathetic world under the auspices of G. Wilkie and J. Robinson, the Pater-

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noster Row publishers. About a year earlier, on May 7, 1809, Shelley had written from Eton to Messrs. Longman & Co., stating that he intended to finish and publish a romance, and offering to send them the MS. Messrs. Longmans appear to have replied that they would be happy to see the novel when finished. They did not, as we have seen, publish *Zastrozzi*, which it is possible, though not certain, is the romance referred to in this letter; on the other hand, it may have been some earlier work from Shelley's fertile pen. Packe believed that Shelley received a sum of £40 for *Zastrozzi*, and "with a part of the proceeds he gave a most magnificent banquet to eight of his friends," of whom Packe was one. Medwin, apparently relying on hearsay, speaks of a "breakfast party," and puts down the cost at £50.

*Zastrozzi* gained for its author a new kind of notoriety at Eton, and Lord Monson was among those who remembered that Shelley had written "a small book in one volume in which he collected together all the horrors he could think of. It was a farrago of what in those days we called pamphlets, little sixpenny books of romance, which the boys in want of reading used to purchase," and he adds, "I quite forget the name of this work of Shelley's, nor have I ever met with it in after life."

It has been stated that Shelley had sold his novel to

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his publisher, but he showed his solicitude in its welfare in writing from Eton on April 1st to Graham, and complaining that Robinson would "take no trouble about the reviews; let everything proper be done about the venal villains," he said, "and I will settle with you when we meet at Easter. We will all go in a posse to the booksellers in Mr. Grove's barouche and four—show them that we are no Grub Street garret-teers. . . . We will not be cheated again—let us come over Jock (probably J. Robinson), for if he will not give me a devil of a price for my poem and at least £60 for my new Romance in three volumes, the dog shall not have them. Pouch the reviewers—£10 will be sufficient, I should suppose, and that I can with greatest ease repay when we meet at Passion week. Send the reviews in which *Zastrozzi* is mentioned to Field Place, the *British Review* is the hardest, let that be pouched well. My note of hand if for any larger sum is quite at your service, as it is of consequence in fiction to establish your name as high as you can in the literary lists. Let me hear how you proceed in the business of reviewing."

Although Shelley displayed in this letter a precocious knowledge of the practices of the reviewers, his efforts met with no marked results. The venal villains, if "pouched," did not respond to the bribe: the book which is quoted in the *British Critic* for April

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1810, among the publications of the month, was advertised in the *Times* of the 5th and 12th of June, and reviewed unfavourably in the *Critical Review* for November 1810.

The new novel to which Shelley refers above was probably *St. Irvyne*. Messrs. Longmans, whom he had approached in regard to *Zastrozzi*, had issued a romance which he much admired entitled *Zofloya, or the Moor*, by Mrs. Byron or Charlotte Dacre, better known under her pseudonym of "Rosa Matilda," and Medwin stated<sup>1</sup> this romance was the model both for *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*. *Zofloya* is a very scarce book, but Swinburne discovered a copy many years ago and described it in a curious letter which I have read through the courtesy of Mr. W. M. Rossetti, to whom it was addressed. The book is not in the British Museum; M. A. Koszul, however, found it on the shelves of the Bodleian Library, and he is convinced that both of Shelley's novels were derived from this weird work of fiction, which confirms Medwin's statement, although Medwin says elsewhere that *St. Irvyne* was suggested by Godwin's novel, *St. Leon*, which he "wonderfully admired."<sup>2</sup>

It is evident that Shelley's mind was saturated with the romantic fiction of the day, and he was able with

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

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his tenacious memory to reproduce the artificial phrases and sentiments of these romances without exercising any creative faculty that he may have possessed of his own.

It has been suggested that Shelley's two novels were translations from the German, and this supposition seems to be based on the authority of Medwin and on the statement of the unknown "Newspaper Editor"<sup>1</sup> whose Reminiscences of Shelley appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* for June 1841. This writer, who was, generally speaking, well-informed, was introduced by Edward Graham to Shelley during his short career at Oxford. On one occasion Shelley came up to London and spent three days with this acquaintance, who says : " At this time he was without a guinea, and had even one day recourse to my own slenderly furnished purse for a small sum, which he repaid on the morrow out of a very small balance which he had received from a bookseller. On this visit to the metropolis he had brought with him the MS. of three tales, one original, the other two translations from the German, which were written in a common school ciphering book. He offered them to three or four booksellers for ten pounds, but could not find a purchaser. On the evening which

<sup>1</sup> Mr. H. Buxton Forman has suggested that the "Newspaper Editor" was William Henry Merle, author of "Costança, a Poem," and some novels. But Dr. Richard Garnett informed Mr. W. M. Rossetti, apparently with assurance, that he was Gibbons Neale.

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preceded my departure (from London to take up a position on a provincial journal) he insisted upon my accepting them as a token for remembrance. They were of a very wild and romantic description, but full of energy. I kept them until about the year 1822, when I lent them for perusal to a friend who held an official situation in the Tower. When I applied for them at the end of some months, I had the mortification of hearing that they had been lost. Two years ago, taking up by chance a paper called the *Novelist*, I saw in it one of those tales as a reprint. How it obtained publication I know not. I am quite sure from the style of the MS. presented to me, that it was not a copy of a paper of which Shelley had preserved the original ; I am equally certain that my friend did not deceive me when he informed me that he had lost the book in which it was written."

The "Newspaper Editor" fails to mention and seems to be unaware that two of Shelley's novels had been published during his lifetime. Both of these romances were reprinted in *The Romancist and Novelist's Library*, and he must have seen one, probably the earlier of these novels. Hogg, however, who knew Shelley's mind pretty thoroughly during his Oxford days, emphatically denies that Shelley possessed any acquaintance with German. In the account of his first actual meeting with

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Shelley at dinner in hall at University College, their conversation practically opened with an animated discussion on the relative merits of German and Italian literature. Shelley expressed an enthusiastic admiration for the poetical and imaginative works of the former school, while Hogg supported the claims of the latter. Later in the evening Shelley confessed that he was not qualified to maintain the discussion, "for he was alike ignorant of Italian and German and had only read the works of the Germans in translations, and but little Italian poetry, even at second hand." Hogg also admitted that he knew nothing of German and but little of Italian.<sup>1</sup> And he is equally emphatic in another statement regarding Shelley's want of knowledge of German. In mentioning the fragment of Schubart's "Wandering Jew," to which reference has already been made, Hogg says that, "if it had been in German, Shelley could not have translated it at that time (1809-10), for he did not know a word of German. The study of that tongue—both being equally ignorant of it—we commenced together in 1815."<sup>2</sup> Medwin, however, thought Hogg was mistaken in this respect, for, when the former met Shelley at Oxford in November 1810, he showed him "a volume of tales which he had himself translated from

<sup>1</sup> Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i. pp. 193-4.

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the original " (German). Medwin spent the whole day with him, and for half an hour he perused these MSS., and formed a very low idea of the literature of the country then almost unknown in England. It is evident that the books that had fallen into his hands were from the pens of very inferior writers, and I told him he had lost his time and labour in clothing them in his own language, and that I thought he could write much better things himself." It is certainly a curious fact that both the "Newspaper Editor" and Medwin state that they had seen a MS. volume of tales of Shelley purporting to be from the German. As far as I am aware, there is no other statement or any evidence in his letters that Shelley had a knowledge of German, at this date. He was, we know, interested in German literature through translations—Burger's *Lenore* he had studied in the translation with Lady Diana Beauclerc's illustrations; as an admirer of the works of "Monk" Lewis he is sure to have been acquainted with his translation of *The Bravo of Venice*, and from the recently published letter of Walter Scott to Shelley, mentioned above, it appears he admired some work, probably the *Idylls*, of Solomon Gessner.

Early in April 1810, Shelley went up to Oxford, and on the 10th of that month he signed his name as a student in the books of University College. He had

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been given what is known as the Leicester Exhibition at that College on the nomination of his uncle, John Shelley-Sidney, Esq., by inheritance from Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. After matriculating he returned to Field Place for the Easter holidays. His sister, Elizabeth, was at home, but the two younger girls, Mary and Hellen, were at Church House, Miss Fenning's school, which formerly stood on the north side of Clapham Common, near the Old Town, and directly facing Trinity Church. Shelley, in anticipation of a visit to London, and in the throes of composing his novel *St. Irvyne*, addressed with the aid of Elizabeth the following mad letter<sup>1</sup> to their friend Graham on Easter Monday :

• FIELD PLACE,  
*Monday (April 23, 1810).*

“ MY DEAR GRAHAM,—At half after twelve do you be walking up and down the avenue of trees near Clapham Church, and when you see a Post Chaise stop at Mrs. Fenning's door, do you advance towards it, and without observing who are inside of it speak to them—An eventful and terrific mystery hangs over it—you are to change your name from Edward Fergus Graham to William Grove—prepare therefore for something extraordinary. There is more in a cucumber than you are aware of—in two cucumbers indeed ; they are now almost 2s. 6d. apiece—reflect well upon that!!!—All

<sup>1</sup> The original is in the collection of Mrs. Alfred Morrison.



MARGARET SHELLEY

HELLEN SHELLEY

*After a picture in the possession of S.r John Shelley, Bart*



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this is to be done on Tuesday (April 24), neither Eishh. or myself cares what else you have to do.

"If Satan had never fallen,  
Hell had been made for thee!"<sup>1</sup>

"Send two 'Zastrozzis' to Sir J. Dashwood in Harley Street, directed to F. Dashwood, Esq.—Send one to Ransom Morland's to be directed to Mr. Chenevix.—I remain, yours devotedly,

P. B. SHELLEY.

"N.B.—The Avenue is composed of vegetable substances moulded in the form of trees called by the multitude Elm trees. Elizabeth calls them so, but they all lean as if the wind had given them a box on the ear, you therefore will know them—Stalk along the road towards them—and mind and keep yourself concealed as my Mother brings a blood-stained stiletto which she purposes to make you bathe in the life-blood of her enemy.

"Never mind the Death-demons, and skeletons dripping with the putrefaction of the grave, that occasionally may blast your straining eye-ball.—Persevere even though Hell and destruction should yawn beneath your feet.

"Think of all this at the frightful hour of midnight, when the Hell-demon leans over your sleeping form and inspires those thoughts which eventually will lead you to the gates of destruction.

(signed by) ELIZABETH SHELLEY."

<sup>1</sup> This couplet is quoted by Shelley from "The Revenge" as a motto for chapter ix. of *St. Irvyne*.

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“ DEAR GRAHAM,

ELIZA. SHELLEY.

The fiend of the Sussex solitudes shrieked in the wilderness at midnight—he thirsts for thy detestable gore, impious Fergus.—But the day of retribution will arrive.

H + D means Hell Devil.

(Written by Elizabeth Shelley.)

“ DEAR GRAHAM,—We really expect you to meet us at Clapham in the way described by the *Fiendmonger* : should you not be able to be there in time we will call at Miller’s Hotel in hopes you will be able to meet us there, but we hope to meet you at Clapham, as Vine Street is so far out of our way to L(incoln’s Inn) Fields, and we wish to see you.—Your sincere Friend,

E. SHELLEY.

DEATH + HELL + DESTRUCTION if you fail.

“ Mind and come for we shall seriously expect your arrival, I think the trees are on the left hand of the Church.—P. B. S.”

[Addressed outside]

“ EDWARD FERGUS H + D + GRAHAM, Esq.

“ Vine Street, Piccadilly, London.”

The writers of this curious invitation seem to have had some misgivings whether Graham would take it seriously, hence the more rational postscripts.

After the Easter vacation, Shelley returned to Eton, and on July 30th he pronounced his speech of Cicero

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against Catiline and finished his schooldays.<sup>1</sup> He then returned home for the midsummer holidays, and spent probably what was one of the happiest periods of his life. It was the occasion of his second meeting with his cousin, Charles Henry Grove, who had just left the Navy, and who recalled in a letter to Miss Hellen Shelley this visit to Field Place with his father, mother, and his sisters Charlotte and Harriet. "Bysshe," he says, "was more attached to my sister Harriet than I can express, and I recollect well the moonlight walks we four had at Strode, and also at St. Irving's :<sup>2</sup> the name, I think, of the place, then the Duke of Norfolk's, at Horsham. That was in the year 1810. After our visit to Field Place, we went to my brother John's house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where my mother, Bysshe, and Elizabeth joined us and a very happy month we spent. Bysshe full of life and spirits, and very well pleased with his successful devotion to my sister. In the course of that summer to the best of my recollection, after we had retired into Wiltshire, a continual correspondence was going on, as, I believe, there had also been before, between Bysshe and my sister Harriet."

<sup>1</sup> Dowden's *Life of Shelley*.

<sup>2</sup> "St. Irving's Hills, a beautiful place, on the right-hand side as you go from Horsham to Field Place, laid out by the famous Capability Brown, and full of magnificent forest trees, waterfalls, and rustic seats. The house was Elizabethan. All has been destroyed."—Hogg's note.

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Thomas Grove, Shelley's uncle by his marriage in 1781 with Charlotte Pilfold, sister of Shelley's mother, lived at Ferne House, Donhead, Wiltshire, near Shaftesbury. He was also the proprietor of Cwm Elan, an estate of ten thousand acres situated five miles east of Rhayader in Radnorshire. The house in a beautiful valley, praised by W. L. Bowles in his poem "Coombe Ellen," can no longer be seen, as it was destroyed towards 1894 in a water-supply scheme for Birmingham. Thomas Grove was the father of a large family of five sons and three daughters, of whom the following come into Shelley's story : Thomas, the eldest, lived at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and later occupied the Welsh estate ; John was a surgeon, who on his father's death succeeded to the estates ; Charles Henry was successively an officer in the Navy, a surgeon, and a clergyman. Harriet Grove was born in 1791, but, as she and Bysshe lived in counties far apart from one another, they had not met since childhood until the year 1808, when she was a girl of seventeen and he a year younger. Medwin seems to refer to 1810 in describing this meeting, but there are reasons for assigning the earlier date, as Shelley speaks of "two years of speechless bliss" in the "Melody to a scene of Former Times"—undoubtedly a serious poem addressed to Harriet Grove—with which he concludes his otherwise frivolous "Posthumous Fragments of

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Margaret Nicholson"—published in the latter part of 1810.

All those who mention her refer to the rare beauty of Harriet Grove, and Medwin knew none that surpassed or could compete with her ; he compared her to one of Shakespeare's women, or to some Madonna of Raphael. A strong family likeness to Harriet Grove was noticeable in Bysshe :

"She was like him in lineaments—her eyes,  
Her hair, her features, they said were like to his,  
But softened all and tempered into beauty."

And this resemblance could not have been unknown to Shelley, who had her in mind when he wrote in 1820 of the love of "Fiordispina and Cosimo" :

"They were two cousins almost like to twins,  
Except that from the catalogue of sins  
Nature had rased their love—which could not be  
But by dissevering their nativity."

In Romney's beautiful portrait of her mother, Mrs. Thomas Grove, one can trace this likeness.

Among the excursions taken during this happy summer was probably one to the school at Clapham Common to see his sisters, a visit which Miss Hellen Shelley remembered. "He came once," she said, "with the elders of the family, and Harriet Grove, his early love, was of the party : how fresh and pretty she

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was ! Her assistance was invoked to keep the wild boy quiet, for he was full of pranks, and upset the port wine in the tray cloth, for our school-mistress was hospitable, and had offered refreshments ; then we all walked into the garden, and there was much ado to calm the spirits of the wild boy." <sup>1</sup>

During this summer Bysshe made a selection of his verses for publication, to which his sister Elizabeth contributed three or four poems. This little collection, his first poetical publication, comprising a total of seventeen pieces, he put into the hands of C. & W. Phillips, a firm of Worthing printers, and then called on Stockdale, the Pall Mall publisher, to whom he afterwards submitted his poem "The Wandering Jew." At Shelley's request, to extricate him from a pecuniary difficulty with his printer, Stockdale, who consented to publish the volume, on September 17th received 1480 copies in sheets of a slender pamphlet of sixty-four pages with the title, *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*, Victor standing for Bysshe, and Cazire for his sister. Shelley, anticipating a considerable demand for the book, had ordered an edition of 1500 copies (twenty of which were retained by the author), and it was duly advertised as "published this day, price 4s. in boards," in the *Morning Post* of September 19th. The sole reference to the volume in

<sup>1</sup> Hogg, vol. i. p. 18.

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Shelley's printed correspondence, besides his notes to Stockdale, is to be found in an undated letter to his friend Edward Graham, of whom he asks, "What think you of our Poetry? What is said of it?—No flattery, remember." Little time, however, was given for the book to "circulate"—as not long after it was announced Stockdale happened to examine its contents, and he recognised one of the poems in the volume entitled "St. Edmond's Eve" to be the work of Matthew Gregory Lewis. *The Tales of Terror*,<sup>1</sup> in which this poem originally appeared, under the title of "The Black Canon of Elmham; or, St. Edmond's Eve," is a book with which one would have expected the young authors of Field Place to have been familiar, and as a matter of fact Cazire "lifted" the ballad from the volume in its entirety. It is somewhat surprising that Victor did not himself detect the peculation. Stockdale, however, was not slow in communicating his discovery to Shelley, "when, with the ardour natural to his character, he expressed the warmest resentment at the imposition practised upon him by his coadjutor, and he instructed me to destroy all the copies, of which about one hundred had been put into circulation" by himself and the author. Probably

<sup>1</sup> Miss Hellen Shelley says that "Monk" Lewis's poems had a great attraction for her brother, "and any tale of Spirits, fiends, &c., seemed congenial to his taste at an early age" (Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 15).

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few, if any, were sold, and the majority sent out found their way to the reviewers' waste-paper baskets. But among those to whom copies were presented by the authors was Harriet Grove, who wrote in her diary on September 17, 1810: "Received the Poetry by Victor and Cazire. C. offended, and with reason. I think they have done very wrong in publishing what they have of her." C. stands for Harriet's sister Charlotte Grove, whose name may probably be filled with the first blank in the lines:

"So . . . is going to . . . you say,  
I hope that success her great efforts will pay  
That . . . will see her, be dazzled outright,  
And declare he can't bear to be out of her sight,"

of the epistle "To Miss [Harriet Grove]. From Miss [Elizabeth Shelley]" which is the second piece in the book.

Miss Hellen Shelley states (Hogg, i. 16) that Bysshe had some of her verses printed, but that when she saw her name on the title-page, "H-ll-n Sh-ll-y," she "felt more frightened than pleased. As soon as the publication was seen by my superiors it was bought up and destroyed." Perhaps Miss Hellen had a confused idea that she was also a contributor to the "Victor and Cazire" volume. Her age in 1810 was only eleven.

The *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire* was noticed in two periodicals—perhaps only two—namely,

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*The British Critic* for April 1811, and *The Poetical Register and Repository of Fugitive Poetry* for 1810 and 1811, but this last was not issued till 1814, when Shelley had long ceased to be interested in the welfare of the book. Poor as are the verses which it criticises, the review that follows is no better :

“ There is no ‘ original poetry ’ in this volume ; there is nothing in it but downright scribble. It is really annoying to see the waste of paper which is made by such persons as the putters together of these sixty-four pages. There is, however, one consolation for the critics, who are obliged to read all this sort of trash. It is, that the crime of publishing is generally followed by condign punishment, in the shape of bills from the stationer and printer, and in the chilling tones of the bookseller, when, to the questions of the anxious rhymers, how the book sells, he answers that not more than half a dozen copies have been sold.”

In his introduction to the “ Fitzboodle Papers,”<sup>1</sup> Mr. George Saintsbury has pointed out a curious resemblance which he observes between the “ Willow Songs ” of “ Ottilia ” and Shelley’s song (No. 12) in the “ Victor and Cazire ” volume, beginning “ Fierce roars the midnight storm.” The late Dr. Garnett, to whom he pointed this out, acknowledged the resemblance, but thought it impossible that Thackeray could have

<sup>1</sup> *The Oxford Thackeray*, 1908, vol. iv.

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seen the poem. Although "the likeness of rhythm and spirit" is curious, it is more reasonable to suppose, as Dr. Garnett suggests, that Thackeray recalled some romantic ballad of M. G. Lewis or by a writer of his period.

## CHAPTER VI

### OXFORD

Shelley enters into residence at University College—T. J. Hogg—His account of Shelley's life at Oxford—His appearance and character—His enthusiasm and his discordant voice—His passion for the physical sciences—The appearance of his rooms—Rural excursions—Sailing paper boats—"Posthumous fragments of Margaret Nicholson"—*St. Irvyne*.

EARLY in October 1810, at the beginning of the Michaelmas term, Shelley returned to Oxford and entered into residence at University College. His rooms, which were situated on the first floor, over the door in the corner of the quadrangle, next to the Hall, are now in use as the junior common-room of the College. Mr. Timothy Shelley, who had been at the same College, probably accompanied Bysshe to Oxford on this occasion, but, not liking the accommodation of an inn, he repaired to a house in the High Street bearing the sign of a leaden horse, at which he had lodged when he was at the University. It was then occupied by Mr. J. Slatter, a plumber, the son of his former landlord, another son of whom was at the time going into partnership with Munday, the Oxford bookseller and printer. Mr. Shelley called at Munday's shop, where

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he told Bysshe (who was with him) to get his supplies of books and stationery. Then turning to the book-seller he said, with parental pride, "My son here has a literary turn, he is already an author, and do pray indulge him in his printing freaks." If Mr. Shelley ever remembered this advice he probably regretted it, as in a very short time he was to look upon his son's "printing freaks" as anything but to be indulged. But Bysshe's literary works, to which his father alluded, were at this time comparatively harmless. He had published his novel *Zastrozzi*, and was joint-author of the abortive collection of *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*, so promptly suppressed on account of his coadjutor's indiscretion, which had robbed it of any claim to originality it might otherwise have possessed. Bysshe also had with him the completed MS. of his second novel *St. Irvyne*, the publication of which had been undertaken by Stockdale at the author's expense, of which more hereafter.

It is not possible to write of Shelley's residence at Oxford without reference to his intimate friend and biographer, Thomas Jefferson Hogg. The eldest son of a barrister and a Tory, Hogg was born at Norton, co. Durham, on May 24, 1792, and was, consequently, Shelley's senior by a little more than two months. Hogg was intelligent, fond of study and of literature, and although he did not share all his enthusiasms, he

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was devoted to Shelley and apparently his only friend at Oxford. Hogg's inimitable description of Shelley's short career at the University is practically our only source of information of the poet's life at that period, and in the following account I have drawn on his biography, often using his own words.

In January 1810, Hogg went to University College, and at the commencement of Michaelmas term—that is, at the end of October in the same year, he “happened one day to sit next to a freshman at dinner.” It was Shelley's first appearance in hall. “His figure was slight, and his aspect remarkably youthful, even at our table, where all were very young. He seemed thoughtful and absent. He ate little, and had no acquaintance with anyone. I know not how it was that we fell into conversation, for such familiarity was unusual, and, strange to say, much reserve prevailed in a society where there could not possibly be occasion for any. We have often endeavoured in vain to recollect in what manner our discourse began, and especially by what transition it passed to a subject sufficiently remote from all the associations we were able to trace. The stranger had expressed an admiration for poetical and imaginative works of the German school; I dissented from his criticisms. He upheld the originality of the German writings; I asserted their want of nature. ‘What modern literature,’ said he, ‘will you

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compare to theirs?' I named the Italian. This roused all his impetuosity; and few, as I soon discovered, were more impetuous in argumentative conversation. So eager was our dispute that, when the servants came in to clear the tables, we were not aware that we had been left alone. I remarked that it was time to quit the hall, and I invited the stranger to finish the discussion at my rooms. He eagerly assented. He lost the thread of his discourse in the transit, and the whole of his enthusiasm in the cause of Germany; for, as soon as he arrived at my rooms, and whilst I was lighting the candles, he said calmly, and to my great surprise, that he was not qualified to maintain such a discussion, for he was alike ignorant of Italian and German, and had only read the works of the Germans in translations, and but little of Italian poetry, even at second hand. For my part I confessed, with equal ingenuousness, that I knew nothing of German, and but little of Italian; that I had spoken only through others, and, like him, had hitherto seen by the glimmering light of translations."

While Shelley was thus engaged in an animated discourse on his favourite study chemistry, in which his companion felt but a slight interest, Hogg had leisure to examine, and indeed to admire the appearance of his very extraordinary guest. "It was," he said, "a sum of many contradictions. His figure was slight and

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fragile, and yet his bones and joints were large and strong. He was tall, but he stooped so much that he seemed of low stature. His clothes were expensive, and made according to the most approved mode of the day, but they were tumbled, rumped, unbrushed. His gestures were abrupt and sometimes violent, occasionally even awkward, yet more frequently gentle and graceful. His complexion was delicate and almost feminine, of the purest red and white; yet he was tanned and freckled by exposure to the sun, having passed the autumn, as he said, in shooting. His features, his whole face, and particularly his head, were, in fact, unusually small; yet the last *appeared* of a remarkable bulk, for his hair was long and bushy, and in fits of absence and in the agonies (if I may use the word) of anxious thought, he often rubbed it fiercely with his hands, or passed his fingers quickly through his locks unconsciously, so that it was singularly wild and rough. In times when it was the mode to imitate stage-coachmen as closely as possible in costume, and when the hair was invariably cropped like that of our soldiers, this eccentricity was very striking. His features were not symmetrical (the mouth, perhaps, excepted), yet was the effect on the whole extremely powerful. They breathed an animation, a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence, that I never met with in any other

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countenance. Nor was the moral expression less beautiful than the intellectual ; for there was a softness, a delicacy, a gentleness, and especially (though this will surprise many) that air of profound religious veneration that characterises the best works, and chiefly the frescoes (and into these they infused their whole souls) of the great masters of Florence and of Rome. I recognised the very peculiar expression in these wonderful productions long afterwards, and with a satisfaction mingled with much sorrow, for it was after the decease of him in whose countenance I had first observed it."

Hogg admired the enthusiasm of, and was drawn towards, his new acquaintance, who appeared to him to possess all those intellectual qualities that he had vainly expected to meet at the University. There was, however, one physical blemish, namely his voice, on account of which Hogg believed it would not be possible for him to endure his society. "It was intolerably shrill, harsh and discordant ; of the most cruel intonation. It was perpetual and without remission ; it excoriated the ear." Hazlitt and Lamb were both in later years repelled by Shelley's shrill voice. Hogg, however, became accustomed to it before long and its discordance ceased to trouble him. Peacock says that Shelley's voice was certainly a defect, but that it was chiefly noticeable when he spoke under

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excitement. It was not only dissonant like a jarring string, but he spoke in sharp fourths, the most unpleasing sequence of sound that can fall on the human ear. He seemed to have his voice under command when he spoke calmly or was reading, and it was then good in time and tone, low, soft, but clear, distinct and expressive. Peacock had heard him with pleasure read almost all Shakespeare's tragedies.<sup>1</sup>

At a quarter to seven Shelley announced to his newly made friend that it was time for him to attend a lecture on Mineralogy, from which he declared enthusiastically that he expected to derive much pleasure. Although the painful voice of his companion caused Hogg to hesitate in asking him to return to tea, he overcame his repugnance, and Shelley, gladly assenting, hurried out of the room, while his footsteps echoed as he ran through the silent quadrangle, and afterwards along the High Street.

But he came back to Hogg's rooms disillusioned, and determined that the lecturer on Geology should never see him again. He had stolen away before the discourse was finished, "for it was so stupid," he said, "and I was so cold, that my teeth chattered. He

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's cousin, Charles Grove, "had no unpleasant recollections of his harsh voice." He was not without an ear for music. Miss Hellen Shelley could remember how her brother used to sing to them: "he could not bear any turns or twists in music, but liked a tune played quite simply."

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talked about nothing but stones, stones, stones, stones, nothing but stones, and so drily." The professor appeared to be displeased, for in trying to get out of the lecture-room without being observed, Shelley had struck his knee against a bench.

After supper Shelley talked of the wonders of chemistry, and asserted that it was the only science that deserved to be studied. While speaking of his own labours in this field, he suddenly started up and proposed that Hogg should go instantly with him to see his galvanic trough.

Anticipating some of the modern uses of chemistry and electricity, Shelley imagined "an unfruitful region being transmuted into a land of exuberant plenty; the arid wastes of Africa refreshed by a copious supply of water." "It will," he said, "perhaps be possible at no very distant date to produce heat at will and to warm the most ungenial climates—as we now raise the temperature of our apartments to whatever degree we may deem agreeable or salutary. But if this be too much to anticipate, at any rate we may expect 'to provide ourselves cheaply with a fund of heat that will supersede our costly and inconvenient fuel, and will suffice to warm our habitations, for culinary purposes and for the various demands for the mechanical arts.' " It is curious to read of his forecast of the uses of electricity and aerial navigation. "What a mighty

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instrument would electricity be in the hands of him who knew how to wield it . . . by electrical kites we may draw down the lightning from heaven. The galvanic battery is a new engine . . . what will not an extraordinary combination of troughs of colossal magnitude, a well arranged system of hundreds of metallic plates effect? The balloon has not yet received the perfection of which it is surely capable; the art of navigating the air is in its first and most helpless infancy. It promises prodigious facilities for locomotion, and will enable us to traverse vast tracts with ease and rapidity, and to explore unknown countries without difficulty. Why are we still so ignorant of the interior of Africa?—why do we not despatch intrepid aeronauts to cross it in every direction, and to survey the whole peninsula in a few weeks? The shadow of the first balloon, which a vertical sun would project precisely underneath it, as it glides silently over that hitherto unhappy country, would virtually emancipate every slave, and would annihilate slavery for ever.”

Of mathematics he declared he knew nothing, “and treated the notion of their paramount importance with contempt.” But Metaphysics he declared “in a solemn tone and with a mysterious air as ‘a noble study indeed.’ . . . Then, rising from his chair, he paced the room with prodigious strides and discoursed

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of souls, a future state, and of pre-existence. Until he suddenly remarked the fire was nearly out, and the candles were glimmering in their sockets, when he hastily apologised for remaining so long." Hogg promised to visit the chemist in his laboratory, on the following day, and lighting him down stairs with the stump of a candle he soon heard him running through the quiet quadrangle in the still night. "That sound became afterwards so familiar to my ear, that I still seem to hear Shelley's hasty steps."

It was nearly two o'clock before Hogg reached his friend's rooms. Shelley, who took no note of time, was amazed to learn that it was so late. He was cowering over the fire, his feet resting on the fender, in an attitude of dejection, the cause of which was a slight cold and the presence of a scout who had been tidying his room, and whose withdrawal as soon as Hogg made his appearance was a welcomed relief to his young master. Shelley's rooms presented a very curious appearance to his visitor. It was evident that they "had just been papered and painted ; the carpet, curtains, and furniture were quite new, but the general air of freshness was greatly obscured by the indescribable confusion in which the various objects were mixed. Books, boots, papers, shoes, philosophical instruments, clothes, pistols, linen, crockery, ammunition, and phials innumerable, with money, stockings,

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prints, crucibles, bags, and boxes, were scattered on the floor and in every place ; as if the young chemist, in order to analyse the mystery of creation, had endeavoured first to reconstruct the primeval chaos. The tables and especially the carpet were already stained with large spots of various hues, which frequently proclaimed the agency of fire. An electrical machine, an air-pump, the galvanic trough, a solar microscope, and large glass jars and receivers were conspicuous amidst the mass of matter. Upon the table by his side were some books lying open, several letters, a bundle of new pens, and a bottle of Japan ink, that served as an inkstand ; a piece of deal, lately part of the lid of a box, with many chips, and a handsome razor that had been used as a knife. There were bottles of soda-water, sugar, pieces of lemon, and the traces of an effervescent beverage. Two piles of books supported the tongs, and these upheld a small glass retort above an argand lamp. I had not been seated many minutes before the liquor in the vessel boiled over, adding fresh stains to the table, and rising in fumes with a most disagreeable odour. Shelley snatched the glass quickly and, dashing it in pieces among the ashes under the grate, increased the unpleasant and penetrating effluvium."

The evening was spent at Shelley's rooms, and he spoke on poetry with the same animation and glowing

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zeal that characterised his former discourses. Hogg, indeed, found his young friend a “ ‘ whole University in himself ’ in respect of the stimulus and incitement which his example afforded to my love of study.” Hogg and Shelley almost invariably passed the afternoon and evening together; at first alternately at their respective rooms, but afterwards, when they had become more familiar, most frequently by far at Shelley’s; sometimes one or two good and harmless men of their acquaintance were present, but they were usually alone. His rooms were preferred because there his philosophical apparatus was at hand, and he was able at any moment to ascertain by actual experiment the value of some new idea that rushed into his brain. He spent much of his time and money at this time in the assiduous cultivation of chemistry. These chemical operations seemed to an unskilful observer to promise nothing but disasters. His hands, his clothes, his books, and his furniture were stained and corroded by mineral acids. More than one hole in the carpet could elucidate the ultimate phenomenon of combustion; especially a formidable aperture in the middle of the room, where the floor also had been burnt by the spontaneous ignition caused by mixing ether with some other fluid in a crucible; and the honourable wound was speedily enlarged by rents, for the philosopher as he hastily crossed the room in pursuit of

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truth was frequently caught in it by the foot. Hogg feared with reason that his friend would poison himself, as the plates and glasses and his tea things were used indiscriminately with crucibles, retorts and recipients, to contain the most deleterious ingredients. Once, when Hogg was taking tea with Shelley by the fireside, his attention was attracted by a sound in the cup into which he was about to pour some tea, and on looking into it he found a seven-shilling piece partly dissolved by *aqua regia*. Although Shelley laughed at his caution, he used to speak with horror of the consequences of having inadvertently swallowed, through a similar accident, some mineral poisons—perhaps arsenic—at Eton, which he believed had not only “seriously injured his health, but that he feared he should never entirely recover from the shock it had inflicted on his constitution.” Hogg, however, detected no serious or lasting injury in his youthful and healthy, although somewhat delicate, aspect.

To Hogg the study of the physical sciences offered no attraction, and he says that through his lack of sympathy Shelley’s zeal, at first so ardent, gradually cooled. Nevertheless their intimacy increased rapidly, and they soon formed a habit of passing the greater part of their time together. If by chance Shelley saw Hogg at Chapel, he studiously avoided all communication, and, as soon as the doors were open, retreated hastily

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to his rooms. He often absented himself from dinner in the hall, which he disliked as he did all College meetings, and he would then lunch with Hogg at one, and take long country walks in the afternoon. Otherwise it was not their custom to meet before that hour, but the country walk was seldom omitted. Shelley usually furnished himself with a pair of duelling pistols and ammunition ; and when he came to a solitary spot he would pin up a card or fix some other mark on a tree or bank, and amuse himself by firing at it. He was a good shot, and his frequent success gave him much delight. But he handled his weapons so carelessly that at length he was induced to leave them at home, as Hogg often contrived secretly to abstract the flints or would purposely forget to bring the powder-flask or some other accessory.

During their rural excursions Shelley loved to walk in the woods, or to stroll on the banks of the Thames. Water had a perennial attraction for him. Hogg says he was a devoted worshipper of the water-nymphs ; for whenever he found a pool, or even a small puddle, he would loiter near it, and it was no easy task to get him to quit it. He specially mentions a pool in an old quarry at the foot of Shotover Hill, where his friend would linger until dusk, “gazing in silence on the water, repeating verses aloud or engage in earnest discussion. Sometimes he would hurl a big stone into

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the water, exult at the splash, and quietly watch the decreasing agitation until the last faint ring had disappeared on the surface." And he would split slaty stones, and when he had collected a sufficient number he would "gravely make ducks and drakes of them, counting with the utmost glee the number of bounds, as they flew along skimming the surface of the pond."

His passion for sailing paper boats he learnt later. It was his practice to screw up a scrap of paper into the semblance of a boat, and on committing it to the water would watch its fortunes. It generally sank, but very occasionally his frail bark would perform its journey and reach the other side of the water. Shelley derived much delight from this form of amusement, and Hogg, who seems to have shown exemplary patience in keeping him company, says that on one occasion only was he successful in prevailing on him to abandon his favourite sport while "any timber remained in the dockyard." It was a bitterly cold Sunday afternoon early in the new year, the sun had set, and it threatened to snow. The poet, with swollen hands, blue with cold, was "creating a paper navy to be launched simultaneously," when Hogg said, "'Shelley, there is no use in talking to you; you are the Demiurgus of Plato!' He instantly caught up the whole flotilla, and bounding homewards with mighty strides, laughed aloud—laughed like a giant, as he used

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to say." As long as any paper remained available to Shelley, when he was engaged in this pursuit, he would continue to convert it into paper boats. After consuming any waste paper he might have with him, he would use the covers of letters, then the letters themselves, even the communications of valued correspondents would share the same fate. And the fly-leaves of books, for he seldom was without one, were used for the same purpose, though he never destroyed the text. Once, so a mythical legend goes, he found himself on the bank of the Serpentine (having exhausted his supplies at the round pond in Kensington Gardens), and the only scrap of paper that he could muster was a bank post-note for fifty pounds. After hesitating for some time, he yielded to temptation and, twisting it into a boat, he committed it to the waves; then he watched its fortunes with anxiety, and was gratified at recovering it on its arrival at the other side of the water.

On returning from their long afternoon rambles, Shelley would be overcome with extreme drowsiness, and sleep from two to four hours, often so soundly that his slumbers resembled a deep lethargy. "He lay occasionally on the sofa," but, as he was very sensitive to cold, "more commonly stretched upon the rug before a large fire, like a cat, and his little round head was exposed to such a fierce heat" that Hogg used to

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wonder how he could bear it. Sometimes his friend would interpose some shelter, but the sleeper usually contrived to turn himself round and to roll again into the spot where the fire glowed the brightest. "His torpor was generally profound, but he would sometimes discourse incoherently for a long while in his sleep. At six he would suddenly compose himself, even in the midst of a most animated narrative, or of earnest discussion; and he would lie buried in entire forgetfulness, in a sweet and mighty oblivion, until ten, when he would suddenly start up, and rubbing his eyes with great violence, and passing his fingers swiftly through his long hair, would enter at once into a vehement argument, or begin to recite verses, either of his own composition or from the works of others, with a rapidity and an energy that was often quite painful." And, while Shelley slept, Hogg seized the opportunity of getting several uninterrupted hours for writing or reading.

As soon as he woke Shelley would be ready for his supper, after which his discourse was eminently brilliant. Although he was as unwilling to separate as Dr. Johnson, on the stroke of two Hogg would rise and depart, with promises to meet him on the morrow.

Before *St. Irvyne* was published, Shelley brought out another volume. He was quick to act on his father's hint to Munday the printer, who soon had a

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chance of indulging him in one of his printing freaks. It must have been on a morning early in November 1810, when his newly made friend, Hogg, called on Shelley at his rooms and found him so absorbed with correcting proofs that an hour passed before he broke silence. He then announced his intention of publishing some poems, the proofs of which he put into the hands of Hogg, who, after reading them through attentively twice, pronounced judgment. He thought that there were some good lines in the verses, but also many irregularities and incongruities. Shelley did not attempt to defend his work, but remarked that, as he was not proposing to issue the poems with his own name, its publication could not harm him. Hogg disagreed with this argument, and the matter was dropped until after dinner, when Shelley returned to the subject. He suggested correcting the defects, but Hogg pointed out that an alteration here and there would transform the verses into burlesque poetry. The poet was amused with the idea, but he gave up his intention of publishing the book. The proofs of the volume, however, lay about Shelley's rooms for some days, and he and Hogg employed themselves from time to time in altering and making the verses more and more ridiculous. Shelley enjoyed the joke, and, in order to give it an additional touch of absurdity, a title-page was devised in which the book was described as "Posthu-

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mous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson : being poems found among the papers of that noted female who attempted the life of the King in 1786. Edited by John FitzVictor.” Hogg says that the story of Peg Nicholson, the mad washerwoman who tried to stab George the Third with a carving-knife outside his palace, was still in the memory of everyone. The woman was living, but as an inmate of Bedlam she was dead to the world, and it was supposed she could suffer no harm by imposing this sheaf of verse on the world as her posthumous works under the editorship of a fictitious nephew, by name FitzVictor, apparently a son of the Victor who had collaborated recently with Cazire. “The idea,” said Hogg, “gave an object and purpose to our burlesque ; to ridicule the strange mixture of sentimentality with the murderous fury of revolutionists, that was so prevalent in the compositions of the day. When the bookseller called for the proof, Shelley told him he had changed his mind about issuing them, but showed him the altered verses. The man was so pleased with the whimsical conceit that he asked if he might publish the book on his own account—promising secrecy and as many *gratis* copies as might be required. The permission was given, and in a few hours the printed volume, ‘a noble quarto,’ appeared—consisting of a small number of pages printed in handsome type, in ink of a rich glossy black, on large,

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thick white drawing paper. Shelley had torn open a large square bundle of books before the printer's boy had quitted the room, and holding a copy in both hands he ran about in an ecstasy of delight, gazing at the superb title-page."

The book was advertised in the *Oxford Herald* for November 17 as just published, price 2s. Hogg says that the first poem, "a long one condemning war in the lump . . . had been confided to Shelley by some rhymester of the day." And in a letter to Graham from Oxford, dated November 30, Shelley speaks of another poem in the volume, namely, a part of the "Epithalamium," as being "the production of a friend's *mistress* ; it had been concluded there," he says, "but she thought it abrupt and added this [some extra lines] : it is omitted in numbers of the copies—that which I sent to my mother did not, of course, contain it—I shall possibly send you the above to-day, but I am afraid that they will not insert it— But you mistake ; the Epithalamium will make it sell like wildfire, and, as the *Nephew* is kept a profound secret, there can arise no danger from the indelicacy of the Aunt— It sells wonderfully here, and is become the fashionable subject of conversation— What particular subject do you mean, I cannot make out, I confess— Of course, to my Father, Peg is a profound secret ; he is better and recovering very fast."

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Hogg also says of the book, "nor was a certain success wanting, the remaining copies were rapidly sold in Oxford at the aristocratical price of half a crown for half a dozen pages. We used to meet gownsmen in High Street reading the goodly volume as they walked—indeed it was a kind of fashion to be seen reading it in public, as a mark of a nice discernment, of a delicate and fastidious taste in poetry, and the very criterion of a choice spirit." And although he adds that "nobody suspected, or could suspect, who was the author"; and "the thing passed off as the genuine production of the would be regicide," the authorship was known to others in Oxford.

Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, in an amusing letter written from Christ Church on March 15, 1811, and published by Lady Charlotte Bury in her *Diary Illustrative of the Times of George the Fourth*, says: "Talking of books, we have lately had a literary Sun shine forth upon us here, before whom our former luminaries must hide their diminished heads—a Mr. Shelley, of University College, who lives upon arsenic, aqua-fortis, half an hour's sleep in the night, and is desperately in love with the memory of Margaret Nicholson. He has published what he terms the Posthumous Poems, printed for the benefit of Mr. Peter Finnerty, which I am grieved to say, though stuffed full of Treason, is extremely dull, but the Author is a great genius, and,

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if he be not clapped up in Bedlam or hanged, will certainly prove one of the sweetest swans on the tuneful margin of the Charwell. . . . Shelley's style is much like that of Moore burlesqued, for Frank is a very foul-mouthed fellow, and Charlotte, one of the most impudent brides that I ever met with in a book."

Another person at Oxford who was in the secret of the authorship was the partner of Munday, the printer of the volume, Henry Slatter, who contributed his recollections of Shelley to the fourth edition of Montgomery's *Oxford*. Slatter's statement that the "Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson" was "almost still-born" is more likely than Hogg's account of its success. It is curious that both Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe and Slatter state that the profits of the "Fragments" were to be applied to Peter Finnerty.<sup>1</sup> Slatter also tells us with regard to this book that "the ease with which Shelley composed many of the stanzas therein contained is truly astonishing; when surprised with a proof from the printers, in the morning, he would frequently start off his sofa, exclaiming, that that had been his only bed, and, on being informed that the men were waiting for more copy, he would sit down and write off a few stanzas, and send them to the press, without even revising or reading them—this I have myself witnessed." When one considers

<sup>1</sup> See page 149.

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the quality of the verses, however, this literary activity does not appear very astonishing.

While "Peg Nicholson" was going through the press, Shelley was preparing *St. Irvyne*, his second novel, for the printers, after Stockdale, his publisher, had been over the manuscript. On November 14, he wrote to Stockdale from University College :

"I return you the Romance by this day's coach. I am much obligated by the trouble you have taken to fit it for the press. I am myself by no means a good hand at correction but I think I have obviated the principal objections which you allege.

"Ginotti, as you will see, did *not* die by Wolfstein's hand, but by the influence of that natural magic which, when the secret was imparted to the latter, destroyed him. Mountfort being a character of inferior import, I did not think it necessary to state the catastrophe of *him*, as at best it could be but uninteresting. Eloise and Fitzeustace are married and happy, I suppose, and Megalena dies by the same means as Wolfstein. I do not myself see any other explanation that is required. As to the method of publishing it, I think as it is a thing which almost *mechanically* sells to circulating libraries, &c., I would wish it to be published on my *own* account. . . . Shall you make this in one or two volumes ? "

Shelley wrote again about *St. Irvyne* to Stockdale, from Oxford on November 19, and expressed surprise "that the Romance would make but one small volume,

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it will at all events be larger than *Zastrozzi*." He was, however, mistaken, for his new novel was shorter.\* "What I mean," he continues, "as 'Rosicrucian' is the elixir of eternal life which Ginotti has obtained, Mr. Godwin's romance of 'St. Leon' turns upon that superstition; I enveloped it in mystery for the greater excitement of interest, and on a re-examination you will perceive that Mountfort physically did kill Ginotti, which must appeal from the latter's paleness. . . . When do you suppose *St. Irvyne* will be out?" This last question was again asked of Stockdale by the anxious young author in another letter from Oxford on December 2. By December 10 the novel, printed and bound, was in Shelley's hands, as on that date he presented a copy to his uncle, Mr. Robert Parker, with a note begging his acceptance of the romance, and adding, "Mr. Parker's initial opinion on the book would be regarded as an honour."<sup>1</sup> Stockdale advertised *St. Irvyne* in the *Times* for January 26, 1811, as "The University Romance.—This day is published, price only 5s. *St. Irvyne; or, The Rosicrucian: a Romance*. By a

<sup>1</sup> This copy of *St. Irvyne* was sold at auction by Messrs. Sotheby on July 22, 1908, for £200. On December 18, 1810, Shelley requested Stockdale to send copies of the romance to Miss Marshall, Horsham, Sussex; T. Medwin, Esq., Horsham; T. J. Hogg, Esq., Rev. (—) Dayrell's, Lymington Dayrell, Buckinghamshire; and six copies to himself. On January 11, 1811, he ordered a copy to be sent to Miss Harriet Westbrook, 10 Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square. He also sent a copy to Robert Southey.

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Gentleman of Oxford University. Printed for Stockdale Junior, 41, Pall Mall," and an earlier announcement probably in this form had caught the author's eye when he wrote to his publisher from Field Place, on December 18, "I saw your advertisement of the Romance, and approve of it highly ; it is likely to excite curiosity." If any novel needed a magnetic influence to attract readers, *St. Irvyne* needed it, but, although the publisher continued to advertise the book, the public was not attracted. By January 11, Shelley may have had some misgivings as to its reception, and ingenuously asked his publisher, "Do you find that the public are captivated by the title-page ? " Unless Stockdale equivocated, Shelley must have been disappointed ; the public showed no signs of being "captivated," for the book, so far from selling "mechanically" at the circulating libraries, appears to have fallen practically unnoticed by the press. *The British Critic*,<sup>1</sup> however, said, "Would that this gentleman of Oxford had a taste for other and better pursuits ; but, as we presume him to be a *young gentleman*, this may in due time happen."

Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe was one of the very few of Shelley's contemporaries at Oxford who took an interest in his doings. In two of his letters, dated respectively on March 15 and October 1811, he speaks

<sup>1</sup> For January 1811.

## Shelley in England

of "Margaret Nicholson," "St. Irvyne," "The Necessity of Atheism," and a poem on the State of Public Affairs. Of the last two we shall have something to say later. In speaking of the novel he writes, "There appeared a monstrous romance in one volume, called *St. Irvyne; or, The Rosicrucian*. Here is another pearl of great price! All the heroes are confirmed robbers and causeless murderers, while the heroines glide *en chemise* through the streets of Geneva, tap at the palazzo doors of their sweethearts, and on being denied admittance leave no cards, but run home to their warm beds, and kill themselves. If your lordship would like to see this treasure I will send it."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Diary Illustrative of the Times of George the Fourth*, by Lady Charlotte Bury, 1838.

## CHAPTER VII

### OXFORD (*continued*)

Further characteristics—Shelley's practical joke—His spare diet—Reading habits—Studies—Plato—Shelley's philosophical doubts—Stockdale warns Mr. Timothy Shelley of his son's views—Mr. Shelley's anger—Shelley's engagement with Harriet Grove cancelled—Elizabeth Shelley and Hogg—Shelley and Bird—*Leonora*—"A Poetical Essay on the Existing State of Things"—Peter Finerty.

To the description of Shelley, as he appeared to Hogg on first making his acquaintance at Oxford, may be added some physical and mental characteristics from the same and other sources. In stature he was above middle height, being five feet ten, but his studious habits and shortness of sight had caused him to stoop from the shoulders. Leigh Hunt, who met him probably during these Oxford days, or shortly after, says "he was then a youth not come to his full height, very gentlemanly, earnest, gazing at every object that interested him, and quoting the Greek dramatists." His body was spare, but his bones large, and although he was strong, light, and active, with singular grace of movement, at times his gestures were almost awkward. Of ordinary mundane wisdom he possessed none, his

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simplicity was infantine, the genuine simplicity of true genius ; and the purity of his life was most conspicuous. "In no individual," says Hogg, "was the moral sense more completely developed, and in no being was the perception of right and wrong more acute. Towards injustice of all kinds he was keenly sensitive, and his philanthropy was boundless. His generous sympathy on witnessing the infliction of pain was too vivid to allow him to consider the consequences of interfering. Hogg tells a story how he rescued a donkey that was being cruelly beaten by a lad in his efforts to force it to carry a burden beyond its strength. On another occasion Shelley procured some milk, and endeavoured to soothe a young and half-witted child, whom he had found, apparently deserted, in a country lane, suffering from exposure and hunger. These instances of his kindness of heart were due to that natural impulse for helping the suffering which, to the end of his life, was one of the most beautiful characteristics of his nature.

We are told that he was habitually grave and possessed an "invincible repugnance to the comic," yet the pranks of a schoolboy still lingered. "The metaphysician of eighteen actually attempted once or twice to electrify the son of his scout, a boy like a sheep, by name James, who roared aloud with ludicrous and stupid terror whenever Shelley affected to bring by

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stealth any part of his philosophical apparatus near to him." <sup>1</sup>

At Oxford, Shelley did not practise vegetarianism, but the plainness of his diet anticipated it, for he questioned even at that time the justification of slaying animals for food. Bread in his case was more than figuratively his staff of life : he could have made it his sole sustenance if compelled by necessity, and he would have been content to do so. When walking in the streets of London, if overcome with hunger he would make a sudden dart into a baker's shop and, purchasing a loaf, break it and offer half to his companion. He said with surprise one day to Hogg, " Do you know that such an one does not like bread ? Did you ever know a person who disliked bread ? " and he added that a friend had actually refused one of his spontaneous offers of half a loaf. In his pockets he generally carried a supply of his favourite food, and " a circle of crumbs on the floor often marked the place where he had sat at his studies, his face nearly in contact with his book, greedily devouring bread amidst his profound abstractions." Occasionally he would add, as a relish to his regimen of bread, common cooking raisins, or oranges and apples from the stalls. For drink he was content with cold water, of which he took frequent draughts, but tea he welcomed, and he

<sup>1</sup> Hogg, vol. i. p. 132.

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would take cup after cup. He drank wine sometimes and diluted it largely with water: spirits he entirely eschewed.

His studies at Oxford were self-imposed, the curriculum of the University he could not or would not follow. He was always actively employed, and no student ever read more assiduously. At all hours he was to be found, book in hand, reading, in season and out of season, at table, in bed, and especially during his walks. Not only in the country lanes, but in the streets of Oxford and the most crowded thoroughfares of London did he pursue his studies. Stooping low with bent knees and outstretched neck, he pored earnestly over the volume before him, and he would elude, with his vast and quiet agility, any malignant interruptions.<sup>1</sup> Hogg, who gives this account of Shelley's reading habits, adds that he never beheld eyes that devoured the pages more voraciously than his, and he was convinced that two-thirds of the day and night were often employed in reading. His inextinguishable thirst for knowledge prompted him frequently to read for sixteen out of the twenty-four hours, when, his book laid open on the chimney-piece, as was his custom, Hogg found it difficult to rouse him from his abstractions to join in conversation.

<sup>1</sup> Hogg, vol. i. p. 125.

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The Oxford of Shelley's time differed little from that of the eighteenth century, when Gibbon spent there the most idle and unprofitable fourteen months of his whole life. Then, as formerly, the fellows enjoyed their emoluments, their food and wine, and troubled themselves little with reading, thinking, or supervising the studies of the place. "Their conversation," says Gibbon in the account of his life at Magdalen, "stagnated in a round of college business, Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal; their dull and deep potations excused the brisk intemperance of youth."

Shelley, who readily met any friendly or sympathetic advances, was quickly repelled by the display of pretentious affectation which was the characteristic attitude of the dons.

A feeble attempt, but not of the kind likely to appeal to Shelley, was made by the authorities to direct his studies. Not long after he arrived at Oxford he was sent for one morning by a little man, presumably a college tutor, who said to him in an almost inaudible whisper, "You must read," and he repeated this injunction many times in his small voice. With Shelley's studious habits, the advice must have appeared welcome, and he replied that he had no objection. To satisfy his mentor, he told him that in his pocket he had some books which he began to take out. The

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little man stared at Shelley and remarked that that was not exactly what he meant, "You must read *Pro-metheus Vinctus*, and Demosthenes' *de Corona* and Euclid—and then he added, "You must begin with Aristotle's *Ethics* and go on with his other treatises." Although Shelley did not appreciate this counsel, he soon took very kindly to the scholastic logic of Oxford and "seized its distinctions with his accustomed quickness."

With Hogg "he exercised his ingenuity in long discussions respecting various questions in logic, and more frequently in metaphysical enquiries." They read much together, and their studies included Locke's *Essay concerning the Human Understanding*, Hume's *Essays*, and *Le Système de la Nature*. The authorship of this book, which has been ascribed both to Helvetius and to J. B. Mirabaud, was really the work of Baron d'Holbach, one of the French Encyclopædists. Shelley's curiosity may have been aroused by seeing Godwin's reference to *Le Système* in *Political Justice*. He was undoubtedly impressed, if not influenced by Holbach's book, and he refers to it in an early letter to Godwin (July 29, 1812) as "of uncommon powers, yet too obnoxious to accusations of sensuality and selfishness." A month later he expressed his intention of translating it, but, zealous champion as he was at that time of free-thought, he was unable to endorse

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entirely the theories of naturalism as set forth in *Le Système*, and he contented himself by quoting some extracts from the book in the notes to "Queen Mab."

They also read Plato, but in Dacier's translation, and in an English version. Shelley earnestly yearned for some vigorous mental exercise, and, although he would have found it then, as he did afterwards, in the study of Plato, he sought for this stimulant in those writers who assailed revealed religion. Hogg suggests that "to a soul loving excitement and change, destruction, so that it be on a grand scale, may sometimes prove hardly less inspiring than creation." Shelley's credulity was such that he "believed implicitly every assertion, so that it was improbable, and incredible, exulting in the success of his philosophic doubts, when like the calmest and most suspicious of analysts he refused to admit, without strict proof, propositions that many, who are not deficient in metaphysical prudence, account obvious and self-evident." But, whatever Hogg may say, Shelley was too intelligent to accept the hollow religious conventions practised and enjoined by his father.

The Shelleys were Whigs, and Bysshe was brought up in an environment in which Liberal ideas were at least nominally encouraged. The personal attitude of his grandfather, Sir Bysshe, towards religion was apparently one of supreme indifference. But Timothy

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Shelley observed the outward forms and teaching of the Church of England such as were in use in the eighteenth century. It was a respectable institution which it was the duty of every country gentleman to support. Professor Dowden stated that Timothy Shelley entered himself as a subscriber for two copies of the Unitarian Sermons of Dr. Sadler under the title "a friend of religious liberty," and said, "When Mr. Edwards [the Vicar of their parish] dies, I should like Mr. Sadler as our clergyman." Timothy Shelley possessed no gift for polemics, but he held to the arguments of Paley (he habitually called him Palley) and recommended his works to his doubting son. Bysshe, who said to Hogg, "my father will call him Palley; why does he call him so?" derived no satisfaction from the study of that divine. His attitude of mind may perhaps have been fostered by his mother, who, according to Bysshe, appears to have been far from orthodox. In a letter to Hogg he writes, "My mother is quite rational; she says, 'I think *prayer* and thanksgiving are of no use. If a man is a good man, philosopher or Christian, he will do very well in whatever state awaits us.' I call this liberality."<sup>1</sup>

Shelley's discussions with Hogg during his first term at Oxford had done much to confirm him in his scepticism. Mr. Lang and others speak of his atti-

<sup>1</sup> May 15, 1811.

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tude as a kind of pose, or boyish prank to tease the dons. But there is every evidence that, whatever Hogg may have been, Shelley, though biassed, was in deadly earnest, for he anxiously studied every book within his reach that was likely to support his views. On November 11, he asked Stockdale in a letter from Oxford to obtain for him "An Hebrew Essay demonstrating that the Christian religion is false," which a clergyman writing in the *Christian Observer*<sup>1</sup> had declared "as an unanswerable yet sophistical argument," and he added that, if it were translated into Greek, Latin, or any of the European languages, he would thank Stockdale to send it.

One can understand that such a book would have appealed to him, as among those with whom he was accustomed to correspond on religious matters were several clergymen.

So far from making a secret of his views, Shelley must have expressed them freely, for both he and Hogg enjoyed a reputation throughout the University for entertaining dangerous opinions.

Shelley was in London, about the middle of December, on his way from Oxford to Field Place, where he was to spend his Christmas holidays, and he probably paid his promised visit to Stockdale's shop to inquire

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Richard Garnett looked through this periodical, but could find no such article.

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about the publication of *St. Irvyne*. Stockdale, who later earned notoriety<sup>\*</sup> as the publisher of a scandalous publication known as the *Memoirs of Harriette Wilson*, appears in 1810 to have been still susceptible of being shocked. He declared, in his recollections of Shelley written some years later,<sup>1</sup> that "not merely by slight hints, but constant allusions, personally and by letters," was he "rendered extremely uneasy respecting Mr. Shelley's religious, or indeed irreligious sentiments towards which all his conversations, reading, and pursuits clearly tended." Few people could withstand Shelley's frank enthusiasm, and he easily won Stockdale's warm regard. The bookseller's motives appear to have been well intentioned, but he was not entirely disinterested: it was reasonable that he may have expected to earn the gratitude of Mr. Timothy Shelley when he communicated to him his suspicions regarding Bysshe's views of religion. The only result of his meddling was that Mr. Shelley lost no time in calling on him at his shop. Stockdale thereupon enlarged on the dangers that threatened his son, and suggested as a remedy that some friend capable of entering into his feelings might endeavour to gain the young man's confidence. But the only friend at this

<sup>1</sup> In *Stockdale's Budget*, 1827. A copy of this curious publication is in the British Museum. Dr. Richard Garnett was the first to draw public attention to Stockdale's references to Shelley in his article, "Shelley in Pall Mall," *Macmillan's Magazine*, June 1860.

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time who was capable of gaining Bysshe's confidence was Hogg, whom Stockdale seems to have suspected ; to Hogg was imputed the blame of having led the poet astray. Smarting under the blow which had been administered by the well-meaning bookseller, Mr. Shelley at once wrote to his erring son, who was now at Field Place, one of his wildly furious letters, in which Hogg was probably made the subject of attack, and he appears to have threatened to withdraw Bysshe from college.

On Mr. Shelley's return home, he wrote on December 23 to thank Stockdale " for the very liberal and handsome manner in which you imparted to me the sentiments you held towards my son, and the open and friendly communication."

But what proved to be the last Christmas that Bysshe spent under his father's roof was anything but a peaceful one. Stockdale had betrayed him to his father and, as he wrote to Hogg on December 20, had " converted him to sanctity. He mentioned my name," he goes on to say, " as a supporter of sceptical principles. My father wrote to me, and I am now surrounded, environed by dangers, to which compared the devils who besieged St. Anthony were all inefficient. They attack me for my detestable principles : I am reckoned an outcast : yet I defy them, and I laugh at their ineffectual efforts. . . . My father wished to with-

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draw me from College : I would not consent to it. There lowers a terrific tempest, but I stand, as it were, on a pharos, and smile exultingly at the vain beating of the billows below . . .” “ How can I fancy that I shall ever think you mad,” he adds : “ am I not the wildest, the most delirious of enthusiasm’s offspring ? ” And he concludes, “ Adieu ! Down with Bigotry ! Down with Intolerance ! In this endeavour your most sincere friend will join his every power, his every feeble resource. Adieu ! ”

But there was another and, for the moment, deeper sorrow that saddened Shelley and made him exclaim to Hogg, “ Oh, here we are in the midst of all the uncongenial jollities of Christmas, when you are compelled to contribute to the merriment of others—when you are compelled to live under the severest of all restraints, concealment of feelings pregnant enough in themselves, how terrible is your lot ! I am learning abstraction, but I fear that my proficiency will be but trifling. I cannot, dare not, speak of myself. Why do you still continue to say, ‘ Do not despond, that you must not despair.’ ”

The cause of this despair was Miss Harriet Grove, Bysshe’s pretty cousin, whose love for him had apparently for some time been lukewarm, and had now, he realised, expired. The last poem in the *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson*, published during

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the middle of the preceding November, is a serious piece entitled, "Melody to a scene of Former Times," beginning :

"Art thou, indeed, for ever gone,  
For ever, ever lost to me?"

which seems to strike a personal note, and perhaps alludes to a coolness on the part of Miss Grove. When he says :

"Two years' speechless bliss are gone,  
I thank thee, dearest, for the dream,"

as I have before pointed out, he appears to be speaking of the two years that had elapsed since that occasion when he and his cousin met for the first time after childhood. Bysshe was an assiduous letter writer, and we know that Miss Grove was one of his correspondents. Religious discussion was at this time as the breath of his life, and he found it impossible to restrain himself from entering upon his favourite topic even in his love-letters. To quote the words of her brother, the Rev. Charles Grove, "She became uneasy at the tone of his letters on the subject of religion, at first consulting my mother, and subsequently my father also on the subject. This led at last, though I cannot exactly tell how, to the dissolution of an engagement between Bysshe and my sister H., which had previously been

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permitted, both by his father and mine.”<sup>1</sup> Grove spent the Christmas vacation at Field Place, and perhaps he conveyed to Bysshe these unwelcome tidings. In his letters to Hogg, Bysshe had much to say on the subject, of her want of enthusiasm ; he speaks of “ the never-dying remorse, which my egotising folly has occasioned,” and attributes the cause of her disloyalty to worldly prejudice and bigotry. His sister Elizabeth attempted sometimes to plead his cause, but in vain. Miss Grove said :

“ Even supposing I take your representation of your brother’s qualities and sentiments, which as you coincide in and admire, I may fairly imagine to be exaggerated, although *you* may not be aware of the exaggeration, what right have *I*, admitting that he is so superior, to enter into an intimacy, which must end in delusive disappointment, when he finds how really

<sup>1</sup> An interesting sidelight is thrown on this episode by Dr. John William Polidori, who accompanied Byron in 1816 as his physician to Switzerland, where he made Shelley’s acquaintance for the first time. He notes, somewhat crudely, in his *Diary* (edited by Mr. W. M. Rossetti, 1911) some facts on the life of Shelley, who undoubtedly confided them to him :

“ Shelley is another instance of wealth inducing relations to confine for madness, and was only saved by his physician [Dr. Lind] being honest. He was betrothed from a boy to his cousin, for age ; another came who had as much as he *would* have, and she left him ‘ because he was an atheist.’ When starving, a friend [ ? Godwin ] to whom he had given £2000, though he knew it, would not come near him.” The last statement seems to relate to William Godwin, who held himself aloof from Shelley when he was in dire need during the winter of 1814, after his elopement with Mary Godwin.

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inferior I am to the being which his heated imagination has pictured." "This was unanswerable," adds Shelley in quoting Miss Grove's decision in a letter to Hogg.<sup>1</sup> Later he writes: "Is she not gone and yet I breathe, I live! But adieu to egotism; I am sick to death of the name of *self*." <sup>2</sup> And again: "Believe me, my dear friend, that my only ultimate wishes *now* are for your happiness, and that of my sisters." <sup>3</sup>

When at last he realised that it was vain to hope for a reconciliation, and that it was now all over between himself and Miss Grove, he wrote: "She is no longer mine! She abhors me as a sceptic, as what *she* was before! Oh, bigotry! When I pardon this last, this severest of thy persecutions, may Heaven (if there be wrath in Heaven) blast me! Has vengeance, in his armoury of wrath, a punishment more dreadful? <sup>4</sup> . . . Is suicide wrong? I slept with a loaded pistol, and some poison, last night, but did not die. I could not come on Monday, my sister would not part with me; but I must—I will see you soon. My sister is now comparatively happy; she has felt deeply for me. Had it not been for her—had it not been for a sense of what I owe her, to *you*, I should have bidden you a

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, December 23, 1810.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley to Hogg, January 2, 1811.

<sup>3</sup> Shelley to Hogg, December 28, 1810.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. W. M. Rossetti points out that this sentence is repeated almost verbatim from Schubart's "Ahasuerus."

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final farewell some time ago. But can the dead feel ; dawns any day-beam on the night of dissolution ? ”<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth “saw me when I received your letter of yesterday,” he wrote to Hogg. “She saw the conflict of my soul. At first she said nothing ; and then she exclaimed, ‘Re-direct it, and send it instantly to the post !’ Believe me, I feel far more than I will *allow* myself to express, for the cruel disappointments which I have undergone.” Shelley seemed to have believed that the letter was about Miss Grove, as he added : “Write to me whatever you wish to say ; you may say what you will on *other* subjects ; but on *that* I dare not even read what you would write. *Forget* her ? What would I not have given up to have been thus happy.”<sup>2</sup>

•

“Forsake her ! Forsake one whom I loved ! Can I ? Never ! But she is gone—she is lost to me for ever ; for ever ! ” he writes in a fit of agony. “I am cold this morning, so you must excuse bad writing, as I have been most of the night pacing a churchyard. I must now engage in scenes of strong interest.” Then on January 11, 1811, comes one of Bysshe’s last references to Harriet Grove in his letters to Hogg : “She is gone ! She is lost to me for ever ! She married ! ”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, January 3, 1811.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley to Hogg, January 6.

<sup>3</sup> Hogg prints “She is married,” but Peacock’s suggested emendation as given above would seem to be correct, as Miss Grove does not appear

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Married to a clod of earth ; she will become as insensible herself ; all those fine capabilities will moulder ! Let us speak no more on the subject. Do not deprive me of the little remains of peace, which yet linger : that which arises from endeavours to make others happy."

His solicitude for the happiness of others included a plan which involved Hogg and his sister Elizabeth, " with whom except an occasional tiff, when she preferred less dry and abstruse matters to his ethical and metaphysical speculations, he agreed most affectionately, cordially, and perfectly." <sup>1</sup> To Elizabeth (of whom he generally spoke to Hogg as " my sister," as if he only had one), he had turned for sympathy, and found it, while he was suffering the tortures of unrequited love. Bysshe had arranged that Hogg should go to Field Place, having undertaken to fall in love with Elizabeth, who had not yet turned seventeen. " If I did not," he adds humorously, in writing years after this incident, " I had no business to go to Field Place, and he would never forgive me. I promised to do my best." Bysshe read Hogg's letters to her, and he was happy when he was able to write

to have married Mr. Heylar until the autumn of 1811. On October 28 of that year, in a letter which Professor Dowden quotes, from Shelley to Charles Grove from York, he says, " How do you like Mr. Heylar ? a new brother as well as a new cousin [the new cousin was Shelley's bride] must be an invaluable acquisition."

<sup>1</sup> Hogg, vol. i. p. 201.

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to him, "She frequently inquires after you, and we talk of you often. I do not wish to awaken her intellect too powerfully ; this must be my apology for not communicating all my speculations to her. . . . I wish you knew Elizabeth, she is a great consolation to me ; but, if all be well, my wishes on that score will soon be accomplished." Bysshe encouraged Hogg to publish a tale, so that he might give Elizabeth a copy, but his great hope of bringing her and his friend together was for the present out of the question. Hogg was in Mr. Timothy Shelley's bad books, thanks to Stockdale, who had already used him as a scapegoat for Bysshe's sins, and was preparing for him an additional burden.

During these days of trouble at home, Shelley did not entirely abandon certain literary projects which he had set on foot at Oxford. It was there that he became acquainted with a literary character named Browne, better known as Bird, who had written a voluminous historical and political work on Sweden. He applied for assistance to Shelley, who with his characteristic generosity agreed to purchase the copyright of the work. To Munday and Slatter, the Oxford printers, Shelley applied for aid in raising the necessary amount, and they, knowing his family and wishing to save him from money-lenders, advanced a sum of £200, and went security for the remaining £400. Type and paper were purchased, but the work had not progressed

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very far when Shelley left the University, and the printers' hopes of recovering their liabilities vanished. Mr. Slatter, who related these facts, did not doubt the intention of Shelley in entering into the engagement, but his prospects suddenly changed, and he was never afterwards in a position to fulfil it.

Hogg, who was staying in London during the Christmas holidays, had literary ambitions, which were fostered by Shelley, and among other attempts he composed some verses on "The Dying Gladiator," the subject of the Oxford English prize poem for 1810. Hogg was not awarded the prize, and Shelley, usually an admirer of his friend's poems, was unenthusiastic over "The Dying Gladiator." But he had faith in Hogg's talents, and it is said, that he wrote with him a novel entitled *Leonora*. This story, like other flotsam and jetsam from Shelley's pen, has not survived, although it went very near to being printed. What little we know of this work is told by Slatter, but there are several references in Shelley's correspondence to a novel which appears to be *Leonora*. Shelley confided to Stockdale, in a letter on December 18, 1810, that he had a novel in preparation. "It is principally constructed," he said, "to convey metaphysical and political opinions by way of conversation,<sup>1</sup> it shall be

<sup>1</sup> A plan subsequently adopted by T. L. Peacock with great success in his novels *Nightmare Abbey*, *Crotchet Castle*, &c.

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sent to you as soon as completed : but it shall receive more correction than I trouble myself to give to wild romance and poetry." The reception of *St. Irvyne* probably did not inspire Stockdale with any desire to become the publisher of another of Shelley's works of fiction. And two days later when writing to Hogg, after he had learnt that Stockdale had been talking him over with his father, he declares that "Stockdale will no longer do for me. I am at a loss whom to select. S.'s skull is very thick, but I am afraid he will not believe my assertion ; indeed, should it gain credit with him, should he accept the offer of publication, there exist numbers who will find out, or imagine, a real tendency ; and booksellers possess more power than we are aware of in impeding the sale of any book containing opinions displeasing to them. I am disposed to offer it to Wilkie & Robinson,<sup>1</sup> Paternoster Row, and to take it there myself ; they published Godwin's works, and it is scarcely possible to suppose anyone, layman or clergyman, will assert that these support Gospel doctrines. If that will not do, I must print it myself. Oxford, of course, would be most convenient for the correction of the press. Mr. Munday's principles are not *very* severe ; he is more a votary to Mammon than God. . . . Inconveniences would now result from my *owning* the novel, which I have in pre-

<sup>1</sup> The publishers of *Zastrozzi*.



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paration for the press. I give out therefore, that I will publish no more ; everyone here, but the select few who enter into my schemes, believe my assertion.”<sup>1</sup>

Shelley's recent “ publishing freaks ” had evidently met with scant sympathy from the household at Field Place, and he was therefore determined to keep his counsel, to which, besides Hogg, his sister Elizabeth was perhaps admitted. *Leonora*, if this was the novel referred to in the above letter, was put into the hands of the printer at Oxford who was at work on Mr. Bird's *History of Sweden*, but, as Slatter tells us, “ the printers refused to proceed with it, in consequence of discovering that he had interwoven his free notions throughout the work, and at the same time they strongly endeavoured to dissuade him from its publication altogether.” This advice was, however, disregarded, and Shelley took the “ copy ” to Mr. King, a printer at Abingdon, who had nearly completed it when Shelley's expulsion from the University stopped further progress of the work. After that event, in writing to Hogg on May 15, 1811, he says, “ How goes on your tale ? I have heard nothing of it. As for mine, I cannot get an answer from Munday's.<sup>2</sup> Do they tremble ? I thought the A[bingdon ?] printer too stupid ; and I defy a zealot to

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, December 20, 1810.

<sup>2</sup> The name is printed by Hogg as “ L . . . ” In the copy of this letter corrected by Lady Shelley, presumably from the original, the name is given as “ Munday's,” which is evidently what was written by Shelley.

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say it does not support orthodoxy. If an author's own assertion in his own book may be taken as an avowal of his intentions, it does support orthodoxy. I could not do more, and yet they say *Mine* is not printable ; it is as bad as Rousseau, and would certainly be prosecuted." A novel by Shelley in the manner of Jean Jacques would certainly be an interesting recovery, if recovery were possible, but printers' proofs (for the book seems to have gone no further than that stage) have usually a very transitory existence, and the chances of its survival are remote.

"I am composing a satirical poem ; I shall print it at Oxford, unless I find on visiting him, that R[obinson] is ripe for printing whatever will sell. In that case he is my man," thus wrote Shelley to Hogg in his letter of December 20, 1811. It is possible, though by no means certain, that he here referred to a poem mentioned by C. K. Sharpe in a letter, already quoted from, in which he says : "Shelley's last exhibition is a poem on the State of Public Affairs." Such a poem seems to have been published, as the late Mr. D. F. MacCarthy discovered in the *Oxford Herald* for March 9, 1811, the following advertisement :

"LITERATURE. *Just Published, Price Two Shillings,* A Poetical Essay on the Existing State of Things [Quotation from Southey's "Curse of Kehama"]. By a gentleman of the University of Oxford. For assisting

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to maintain in Prison Mr. Peter Finnerty, imprisoned for a libel. London, sold by B. Crosby and Co., and all other booksellers, 1811."

The title also figures in a list of books published during 1810-11 in *The Poetical Register*.

No copy of the *Poetical Essay* has as yet come to light, and it is not mentioned by this title in Shelley's published correspondence. But in assigning the book to Shelley there is the evidence of C. K. Sharpe, and, as in the case of *St. Irvyne*, it is described on the title-page as "by a gentleman of the University of Oxford." The quotation from the "Curse of Kehama" also suggests Shelley, who inquired of Stockdale, in his letter of December 2, if he knew when Southey's poem would come out, as he was curious to see it. We know that he procured "Kehama" as soon as it was published, and it long remained a favourite with him.

Peter Finnerty was an Irish journalist, born in 1766, who got into trouble during the Rebellion of 1798, as printer of the *Dublin Press*. For a political libel he suffered imprisonment, and his types and press were destroyed. On his release he went to England and became a reporter on the *Morning Chronicle*. To this paper, on January 23, 1810, he contributed a letter on Lord Castlereagh, whom Leigh Hunt said "he accused of an intention to harass and destroy him, and reminded the Viscount of the tyrannous and

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horrible cruelties practised upon the people of Ireland during his administration of that country." A year later Finnerty was tried for libel and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. His case was reported in the *Oxford Herald*, in which journal a subscription to maintain him during his imprisonment was opened. Shelley's name as a subscriber of one guinea appears in the *Herald* for March 2, 1811, and a like amount is acknowledged to Mr. Hobbs, of whom more presently, and to Mr. Bird, evidently the Historian of Sweden. Shelley's interest in Finnerty did not cease with the publication of the "Poetical Essay." He mentioned him in his "Address to the Irish People"; and in a speech which he made during his Irish campaign in the spring of 1812, at the Fishamble Theatre, Dublin, he was reported to have commiserated with the sufferings of Finnerty, and to have written "a very beautiful poem, the profits of which we understand, from *undoubted* authority, Mr. Shelly [*sic*] remitted to Mr. Finnerty; we have heard that they amounted to nearly a hundred pounds." <sup>1</sup> This statement cannot be reconciled with the fact that the book has entirely disappeared, as, in order to yield such a sum, it would have been necessary to sell a considerable number

<sup>1</sup> *The Dublin Weekly Messenger*, March 7, 1812. A copy of this paper with a mark against the article on "Pierce Byshe Shelly, Esq.," is among the Shelley-Whitton papers.

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of copies at the price of two shillings. Professor Dowden suggested that the " Poetical Essay " may possibly have comprised an earlier form of the portion of " Queen Mab " [printed in 1813] that relates to the present time, and that this part constituted the germ of the poem : the other sections dealing with the past and the future being afterwards added. Some reason for this theory may be found in an information laid before the Lord Chancellor in 1817, who was in possession of Eliza Westbrook's copy of " Queen Mab," that that poem was actually written and published when the author was of the age of nineteen.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PHILOSOPHIC DOUBTS

Metaphysical studies—Religious doubts—Shelley's passion for dispute—His miscellaneous correspondents—On the existence of the Deity—His tirade against intolerance—A first cause—"Armageddon heroes"—The fears of his father and mother—Hogg's tale—Stockdale makes trouble—Timothy Shelley reconciled—Exit Stockdale—Shelley's return to Oxford—On the evidences of Christianity—"Parthenon"—Shelley's belief in pre-existence—The adventures of a coat.

SHELLEY went up to Oxford, as we have seen, a devoted student of natural philosophy, but he failed to imbue his friend Hogg with his love of chemistry and electricity. Lacking the sympathy of his companion in this direction, he discovered it in another, namely, in the study of metaphysics, into which science he plunged with his characteristic energy. The course of his incessant reading included theology, and his confession to a correspondent <sup>1</sup> in the spring of 1811, "I was once an enthusiastic Deist, but never a Christian," is evidently in allusion to his state of mind during the winter of 1810-11.

There seems to be no reason to suppose that Shelley had troubled himself very much with questions of

<sup>1</sup> Janetta Philipps.

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religion during his Eton days, and his interest in the subject at Oxford may be said to have been mainly polemical. He was concerned at this time with such discussions as those referring to the evidences of Christianity and the existence of the Deity, but he had not then been moved by the deeper spiritual issues which afterwards attracted him when he was writing his Essay on Christianity. We can see in his letters to Hogg, during the Christmas of 1810, how his mind alternates between the acceptance of a belief in a Supreme Being and total disbelief.

But before Christmas he had grown tired of the works of controversial divines, and he announced, in a letter to Hogg on December 23, that he had done with such studies. "I shall not read Bishop Prettyman,<sup>1</sup> or any more of them," he said, "unless I have some particular reason. Bigots will not argue; it destroys the very nature of things to argue; it is contrary to faith. How therefore could you suppose that one of these liberal gentlemen would listen to scepticism on the subject even of St. Athanasius's sweeping anathema?"

<sup>1</sup> Sir George Pretymen Tomline, Bishop of Winchester, was until 1803 known by the name of Pretymen. In 1799 he published his popular, though not very deep, *Elements of Christian Theology*, dedicated to Pitt (whose tutor he had been), and used by candidates for ordination. Tomline was described in the *Dict. Nat. Biog.* as "a supporter of the prerogative and an uncompromising friend to the existing state of things." He objected, however, so strongly to Catholic Emancipation, that he declared (and evidently did so to give a proof of his courage) that he was prepared to oppose it, even if supported by his patron.

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Argument was the breath of Shelley's life ; he loved it passionately as he did letter-writing. Logic and Letters were to him toys and mascots. He would relinquish neither. His investigations in pursuit of Truth included a vigorous correspondence upon controversial religion, and among those personally unknown to him, to whom he had written while in London, " by way of a gentle alterative," apparently on the subject of the Athanasian Creed, was a certain Mr. W. It is not known whether Shelley had posed as a clergyman in order to " draw " his correspondent, or whether W. was merely puzzled at the recondite character of his letter. " He promised to write to me when he had time," exclaimed Shelley, " seemed surprised at what I had said, yet directed me as the Reverend : his amazement must be extreme." When at length the letter from W. arrived at Field Place, Shelley wrote to Hogg that it was too long to answer ; but three days later he promised to send it to his friend, who had then returned to Oxford, and added, " If it amuses you, you can answer him, if not I will." Hogg returned W.'s letter with his reply to Shelley, who pronounced the rejoinder " excellent," and wrote : " I think it will fully (in his own mind) convince Mr. W. I enclosed five sheets of paper full this morning, and sent them to the coach with yours. I sate up all night to finish them ; they attack his hypothesis at

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its very basis which, at some future time, I will explain to you : and I have attempted to prove, from the existence of a Deity and a Revelation, the futility of the superstition upon which he forms his whole scheme."

But to go back. On December 23, Shelley adduces the popular objection to the free discussion of religious topics to prejudice and superstition. " You have said that the philosophy, which I pursued, is not uncongenial with the strictest morality ; you must see that it militates with the received opinions of the world ; that, therefore, does it offend but [offends only] prejudice and superstition, that superstitious bigotry, inspired by the system upon which at present the world acts, of believing all that we are told of as incontrovertible facts."

In his letter to Hogg of January 3, in which he communicates the news that he had been thrown over by Harriet Grove, before coming to the subject, as if he desired to defer it as long as possible, he pauses to discuss the subject of the existence of God, and says :

" Before we deny or believe the existence of anything, it is necessary that we should have a tolerably clear idea of what it is. The word ' God,' a vague word, has been, and will continue to be, the source of numberless errors, until it is erased from the nomenclature of philosophy. Does it not imply " the soul of the Universe, the intelligent and *necessarily* beneficent actuating principle ? ' This it is impossible not

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to believe in ; I may not be able to adduce proofs ; but I think that the leaf of a tree, the meanest insect on which we trample, are, in themselves, arguments more conclusive than any which can be advanced, that some vast intellect animates infinity. If we disbelieve *this*, the strongest argument in support of the existence of a future state instantly becomes annihilated. I confess that I think Pope's

“All are but parts of one stupendous whole ”

something more than poetry. It has ever been my favourite theory. For the immortal soul ‘ never to be able to die, never to escape from some shrine as chilling as *the clay-formed dungeon*,<sup>1</sup> which now it inhabits ’—it is the future punishment which I can most easily believe in.

“ Love, love, *infinite in extent*, eternal in duration, yet (allowing your theory in that point) perfectible, should be the reward ; but can we suppose that this reward will arise, spontaneously, as a necessary appendage to our nature, or that our nature itself could be without cause—a first cause—a God ? When do we see effects arise without causes ? What causes are there without corresponding effects ? Yet here I swear—and as I break my oath may Infinity Eternity blast me—here I swear, that never will I forgive intolerance ! It is the only point on which I allow myself to encourage revenge ; every moment shall be devoted to my object, which I can spare ; and let me hope that it will not be a blow which spends itself, and leaves the wretch at rest—but lasting, long revenge ! I am convinced too that it is of great dis-service to Society,

<sup>1</sup> So in Schubart.

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that it encourages prejudices, which strike at the root of the dearest, the tenderest of ties. Oh ! how I wish I were the avenger !—that it were mine to crush the demon ; to hurl him to his native hell, never to rise again, and thus to establish for ever perfect and universal toleration. I expect to gratify some of this insatiable feeling in poetry. You shall see—you shall hear—how it has injured me.”

Shelley then goes on to break the tidings that Harriet Grove was lost to him, and her reason for proving faithless was that she “abhorred” him for being “a sceptic” and holding opinions which she herself had once held.

Hitherto he had been a questioner, but what he considered as an act of bigotry on the part of Harriet Grove and her parents, in cancelling his engagement, had prompted him to exclaim on January 6, “I will crush Intolerance. I will, at least, attempt it. To fail even in so useful an attempt were glorious !” To this and similar expressions Shelley gave vent in his letters to Hogg while suffering under the loss of Harriet Grove. It was his first challenge to the world, a defiance which in later years rang forth in “Queen Mab,” “The Revolt of Islam,” and “The Masque of Anarchy.”

In this same letter he proceeds to consider an argument which he had received from Hogg “against the Non-existence of a Deity. Do you allow,” he says,

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“that some *supernatural* power actuates the organization of physical causes ? . . . If this Deity thus influences the action of the Spirits (if I may be allowed the expression) which take care of minor events (supposing your theory be true), why is it *not* the soul of the Universe ; in what is it not analogous to the soul of man ? Why *too* is *not* gravitation the soul of a clock ? . . . I think we may not inaptly define *Soul* as the most supreme, superior, and distinguished abstract appendage to the nature of anything.”

These extracts from Shelley's letters, with the following, show the incertitude of his mind :

“What necessity is there for continuing in existence ? But Heaven ! Eternity ! Love ! My dear friend, I am yet a sceptic on these subjects ; would that I could believe them to be, as they are represented ; would that I could totally disbelieve them ! But no ! That would be selfish. I still have firmness enough to resist to the last, this most horrible of errors. . . . I wish, ardently wish, to be profoundly convinced of the existence of a Deity, that so superior a spirit might derive some degree of happiness from my feeble exertions :

“For love is heaven and heaven is love.”<sup>1</sup>

You think so, too, and you disbelieve not the existence

<sup>1</sup> From Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, quoted also by Shelley as a motto for a chapter in *St. Irvyne*.

## Philosophic Doubts

of an eternal, omnipresent Spirit. . . . Stay ! I have an idea. I think I can prove the existence of a Deity—a First Cause. I will ask a materialist, how came this universe at first ? He will answer by chance. What chance ? ”<sup>1</sup> Then he proceeds to argue his case in support of “ A First Cause,” and he adds : “ Oh, that this Deity were the soul of the universe, the spirit of universal, imperishable love ! Indeed I believe it is : but now to your argument of the necessity of Christianity. I am not sure that your argument does not tend to prove its unreality.” Here we see Shelley pleading the cause of Deism, but he cannot resist a sally at Orthodoxy : “ Hideous, hated traits of Superstition. Oh ! Bigots, how I abhor your influence ; they are all bad enough—but do we not see Fanaticism decaying ? is not its influence weakened, except where Faber, Rowland Hill, and several others of the Armageddon heroes maintain their posts with all the obstinacy of long-established dogmatism ? ”

Apart from this grief at the loss of Harriet Grove, Bysshe cannot have found the atmosphere of Field Place congenial, and but for the prospect of having to leave his sister Elizabeth, he must have looked forward with pleasure to his return to Oxford. If he were not actually in disgrace with his father, there was probably a coolness between them arising out of the reasons that

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, Jan. 12, 1811.

## Shelley in England

the Groves had given for breaking off Harriet's engagement. Mr. Timothy Shelley was conventional, and to avow, as Bysshe had done to Stockdale, opinions such as were held by Tom Paine and other Deists was against the canons of respectability. To be respectable was the whole duty of a gentleman. Although Timothy Shelley was prepared to do anything within reason for Bysshe, and to provide handsomely for him, his feelings had been trampled on and his sense of dignity injured. Mrs. Shelley likewise had her fears: "My Mother imagines me to be in the high road to Pandemonium, she fancies I want to make a deistical coterie of all my little sisters: how laughable!" And it was, perhaps, for Bysshe had told Hogg that he did not communicate to Elizabeth all his speculations, and on another occasion he withheld a letter which his friend had sent apparently to guide her on some speculative matter.

One should not so much blame Mr. Timothy Shelley and his wife for their attitude, as deplore the irony of fate that enabled an old-fashioned, middle-aged squire to beget in the reign of George the Third a son of Bysshe's temperament and genius.

Before Bysshe returned to Oxford other troubles arose for him. Stockdale, the publisher of *St. Irvyne*, had received the confidences of Shelley as well as Hogg, both of whom had placed manuscripts

## Philosophic Doubts

in his hands. It seems clear that Shelley's manuscript was the *Necessity of Atheism*; Hogg's may have been a tale<sup>1</sup> that he had written, which Shelley, who evinced great interest, had urged him to get published. In his account of the matter, Stockdale tells us, Shelley had informed him of a metaphysical essay, in support of Atheism, that he had completed: this he intended to promulgate through the University. Stockdale warned him "that his expulsion would be the inevitable consequence of so flagrant an insult to such a body. He, however, was unmoved," and Stockdale added, "I instantly wrote to his father."

Hogg had called occasionally at Stockdale's shop as Shelley's friend, but he failed to make a favourable impression on the publisher, who did not consider that he could have led Shelley "astray"; he regarded his mind "so infinitely beneath that of his friend." Hogg was evidently viewed with suspicion by Stockdale who, however, had what he may have considered a lucky inspiration. He had noticed by Hogg's address that he was connected in some way with "the worthy" Rev. John Dayrell, of Lynnington Dayrell. not far from Mrs. Stockdale's native place; he also believed that "Shelley was unquestionably in a most devious

<sup>1</sup> "Pray publish your tale; demand one hundred pounds for it from any publisher;—he will give it in the event. It is delightful, it is divine—not that I like your heroine—but the poor Mary is a character of heaven I adore her!" (Shelley to Hogg, Jan. 3, 1811).

## Shelley in England

path." Stockdale therefore promptly asked his wife if she knew anything of the young man. Whereupon good Mrs. Stockdale busied herself in the matter, with the result that her "recollection and enquiry" confirmed the worst suspicions of her husband, who declared, in a manner worthy of the publisher of *St. Irvyne*, "that if I did not rush forward, and, however rudely, pull my candidate for the bays from the precipice, over which he was suspended by a hair, his fate must be inevitable."

Mr. Timothy Shelley, with Stockdale's letter in his hand, must have questioned Bysshe about his friend and his latest "printing freaks," as they were both calculated to become a source of trouble. I do not think it unlikely that he may have tried to help the boy in a fatherly way, to allay his religious doubts. Bysshe, however, wrote in anger to Hogg on January 14: "Stockdale has behaved infamously to me: he has abused the confidence I reposed in him in sending him my work; and he has made very free with your character, of which he knows nothing, with my father. I shall call on Stockdale in my way, that he may explain." And again, three days later: "Stockdale certainly behaved in a vile manner to me; no other bookseller would have violated the confidence reposed in him. I will talk to him in London, where I shall be on Tuesday [January 22]."

## Philosophic Doubts

Bysshe did not take his father's ministrations kindly, and gave vent in the same letter to the following unfilial remarks : " Your systematic cudgel for block-heads is excellent. I tried it on with my father, who told me that thirty years ago he had read Locke, but this made no impression. The '*equus et res*' are all that I can boast of ; the '*pater*' is swallowed up in the first article of the catalogue. You tell me nothing of the tale ; I am all anxiety about it."

These communications naturally roused Hogg's ire ; he had been accused of some unspecified infamy ; he was determined to bring the meddling bookseller to account, and addressed to him the following letter :

*T. J. Hogg to J. J. Stockdale*

OXFORD, *Jan.* 21, 1811.

SIR,—I have just heard from a friend to my great surprise that you have made very free with my character to Mr. Shelley. I feel it my duty as a gentleman closely to investigate this extraordinary conduct. I ask what there was in my behaviour to you contrary to the strictest politeness, what there was to justify such an infamous proceeding ?

I insist, Sir, upon knowing the precise nature, the very words of your conversation with Mr. S. . . .

I insist upon being informed upon what authority you spoke thus of me. I demand a full, a perfect apology from yourself. I desire that you should

## Shelley in England

immediately write in order to contradict whatever you may have told Mr. Shelley or anyone else.

When I am informed of the exact nature of the offence I can judge of the necessary apology.

The bare mention, of the MS. with which I entrusted you to any one was an unparalleled breach of confidence.—There may have been instances of booksellers who have honourably refused to betray the authors whose works they have published altho' actions were brought against them. I believe that one gentleman had honour enough to submit to the pillory rather than disgrace himself by giving up the name of one who had confided in him, however unworthy he might be of such generous treatment. Altho' I might be disposed to pardon this offence against myself, I feel it my duty to caution the world against such flagrant violation of principle.

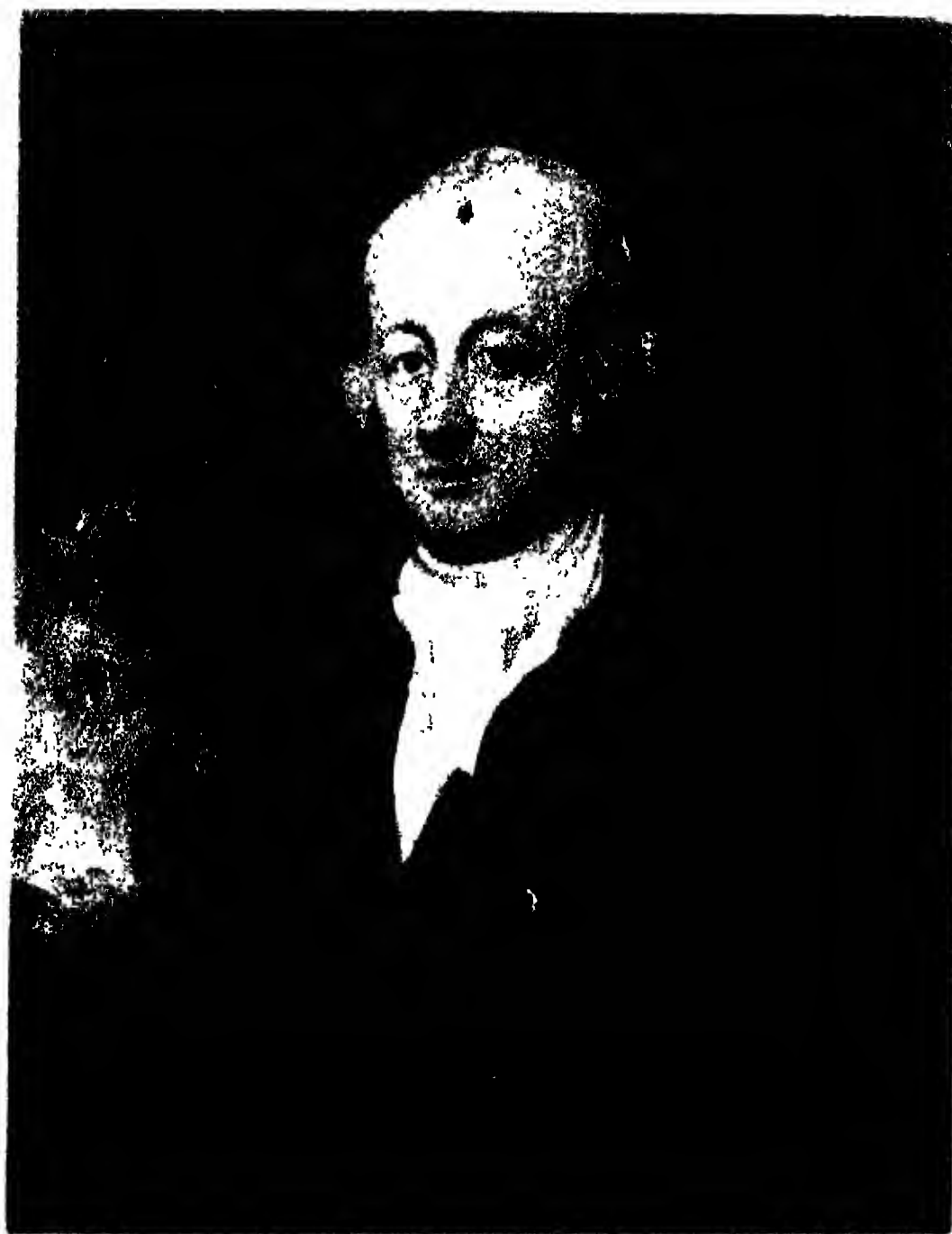
I shall consequently insert in the public newspapers an anonymous advertisement containing a plain statement of the manner in which you have acted. An immediate answer to this letter is desired by, Sir, yours &c. &c.,

T. JEFFERSON HOGG.

UNIV. COLL.

The gentleman who submitted to the pillory was no doubt the long-suffering Peter Finnerty.

Mr. Timothy Shelley went to London to see Stockdale and find out what was amiss, for, as he wrote in his reply to that worthy man, "I cannot comprehend the meaning of the language you use." He was, however, by no means pleased with the bookseller,



SIR TIMOTHY SHELLEY, BART.

*After the picture by George Romney, R.A.,  
in the possession of Sir John Shelley, Bart*



## Philosophic Doubts

and turning his back on him he proceeded in the direction of Westminster to make inquiries about Hogg.

The result was most satisfactory, and he returned home evidently in a good humour, for Bysshe wrote cheerfully to his friend : “ My father’s prophetic prepossession in your favour is become as high as before it was to your prejudice. Whence it arises, or from what cause, I am inadequate to say ; I can merely state the fact. He came from London full of your praises ; your family, that of Mr. Hogg of Norton House, near Stockton-upon-Tees. Your principles are *now* as divine as before they were diabolical. I tell you this with extreme satisfaction, and to sum up the whole, he has desired me to make his compliments to you, and to invite you to make Field Place your headquarters for the Easter Vacation. I hope you will accept of it. I fancy he has been talking in town to some of the northern Members of Parliament who are acquainted with your family. However that may be, I hope you have no other arrangement for Easter which can interfere with granting me the pleasure of introducing you personally here.”

On his return to Oxford, Bysshe learnt some further particulars about Stockdale, whose reply to Hogg’s letter had been so unsatisfactory that he had written again, only to receive an equally evasive answer.

## Shelley in England

Shelley therefore took up the matter himself and wrote :

*P. B. Shelley to J. J. Stockdale*

OXFORD, Jan. 28, 1811.

SIR,—On my arrival at Oxford, my friend Mr. Hogg communicated to me the letters which passed in consequence of your misrepresentations of his character, the abuse of that confidence which he invariably reposed in you. I now, sir, desire to know whether you mean the evasions in your first letter to Mr. Hogg, your insulting *attempt* at coolness in your second, as a means of escaping *safely* from the opprobrium naturally attached to so ungentlemanlike an abuse of confidence (to say nothing of misrepresentation) as that which my father communicated to me, or as a *denial* of the fact of having acted in this unprecedented, this *scandalous* manner. If the former be your intention, I will compassionate your cowardice, and my friend, pitying your *weakness*, will take no further notice of your contemptible *attempts* at calumny. If the latter is your intention, I feel it my duty to declare, as my veracity and that of my father is thereby called in question, that I will never be satisfied, despicable as I may consider the author of that affront, until my friend has ample apology for the injury you have attempted to do him. I expect an immediate, and demand a satisfactory letter.—Sir, I am your obedient humble servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

After Shelley's expulsion from Oxford he wrote to ask Stockdale how many copies had been sold of *St.*

## Philosophic Doubts

*Irvyne*, and requested him to make out his accounts. The bookseller's reply took some time to reach Shelley, who was then at Rhayader : he replied on August 1, 1811 : " I am sorry to say, in answer to your requisition, that the state of my finances renders immediate payment perfectly impossible. It is my intention, at the earliest period of my power to do so, to discharge your account. I am aware of the imprudence of publishing a book so ill-digested as *St. Irvyne* ; but are there no exceptions on the profits of its sale ? My studies have, since writing it, been of a more serious nature. I am at present engaged in completing a series of moral and metaphysical essays—perhaps their copyright would be accepted in lieu of part of the debt."

Stockdale very wisely declined this offer, but he stated in 1827, in his recollections of Shelley, that he did not question his intention of paying the account for the publication of *St. Irvyne*, and that it was his conviction that Shelley " would vegetate rather than live, to effect the discharge of every honest claim upon him." Recognising that there was little to be hoped from Shelley, he applied to his father, who said that his son was not of age, and that he would never pay a farthing of the account. So it was never settled.

Pondering alone at Field Place over his conversa-

## Shelley in England

tions on religion with Bysshe after he had left Oxford, Timothy Shelley was resolved to try to win his son back to the fold. In the letter which he addressed to Bysshe he probably wrote on the evidences of Christianity, having fortified himself during his task with deep draughts from the works of his favourite divine, Paley. In order to show that some men of great mental powers have been Christians, he cited the instances, among others, of Locke and Newton. Bysshe's reply is the first of a series of unpublished letters which I shall print in the following pages :

### *P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

UNIV. COLL., OX., *Feb. 6, 1810*  
[misdated for 1811].

MY DEAR FATHER,—Your very excellent exposition on the subject of Religion pleases me very much. I have seldom seen ideas of Orthodoxy so clearly defined. You have proved to my complete satisfaction that those who do not think at all, a species which contains by far the major part of even uncivilised society, ought to be restrained by the bonds of *prejudicative* religion, by which I mean that it is best that they should follow the religion of their fathers whatever it may be, not having sufficient principle to discharge their duties without leaning on some support, a slight support being better than none at all. So much for the beings who ought to take things upon trust ; But after a rational being, or rather a being

## Philosophic Doubts

possessing *capabilities* for superadded *rationability*, has proceeding to perfectibility passed that point, before which he could not or used not to reason, after which he both *did* reason, and took interest in the inferences which he drew *from* that reason. Do you then deny him to *use* that reason in the very point which is most momentous to his present, to his future happiness, in the very point which, as being of greater importance, demands a superior energization of that most distinguishing faculty of man. You cannot deny him *that* which is, or ought to be the essence of his being, you cannot deny it him without taking away that *essentia* and leaving him not an "animal rationale" but "irracionale," retaining no distinguishing characteristic of "*Man*" but "animal bipeds implume risibile."—I then have passed that point, because I *do* reason on the subject, I *do* take interest in that reasoning and from that reasoning I have adduced to my own, I think I could to your *private* satisfaction, that the testimony of the twelve Apostles is insufficient to establish the truth of their doctrine, not to mention how much *weaker* the evidence must become, when filtered thro' so many gradations of history, so many ages.

Supposing twelve men were to make an affidavit before you that they had seen in Africa a vast snake three miles long, suppose they swore that this snake eat nothing but Elephants, and that you knew from all the laws of nature, that enough Elephants could not exist to sustain the snake, would you believe them? The case is the same, . . . it is clearly therefore proved that we cannot, if we *consider* it, believe facts inconsistent with the general laws of Nature, that there is

## Shelley in England

no evidence sufficient, or rather that evidence is insufficient to prove such facts. I could give you a methodical proof if you desire it, or think this to be inconclusive.

As to Locke, Newton, etc., being Christians, I will relate an anecdote of the latter. At Cambridge he kept chickens, and making a Box for them he provided a large hole for the Hen to go out of, smaller ones for the chickens. What an inconsistency for a Genius who was searching into the mechanism of the Universe. Locke's Christianity cannot *now* appear so surprising, particularly if we mention Voltaire, Lord Kames, Mr. Hume, Rousseau, Dr. Adam Smith, Dr. Franklin et *mille alios*, all of whom were Deists, the life of all of whom was characterised by the strictest morality : all of whom whilst they lived were the subjects of panygeric [*sic*], were the directors of literature and morality. *Truth*, whatever it may be, has never been known to be prejudicial to the best interests of mankind, nor was there ever a period of greater tranquillity in which the name of Religion was not even mentioned. Gibbon's History of the decline and fall of the Roman empire proves this truth satisfactorily.

Thus far, my dear Father, have I thought it necessary to explain to you my sentiments, to explain to you upon what they are founded, as far as the imperfect medium of a letter will allow. At some leisure moment may I request to hear your objections (if any yet remain) to my private sentiments—"Religion fetters a reasoning mind with the very bonds which restrain the unthinking one from mischief." This is my great objection to it. The coming of Christ was called *εὐαγγέλιον* [*sic*] or good tidings ; it is hard to believe

## Philosophic Doubts

how those tidings *could* be *good* which are to condemn more than half of the world to the Devil, for, as St. Athanasius says, "He who does not believe should go into eternal fire"—As if belief were voluntary, or an action, not a passion (as it is) of the mind. I will now conclude this letter, as, knowing your dislike to long scrawls, I fear I must have tired you. Believe me, whatever may be my sentiments, Yrs. most dutiful affect.

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

T. SHELLEY, ESQ., M.P.,  
Miller's Hotel,  
Westr. Bridge,  
London.

*Postmark, OXFORD.*  
*8 Feb. 1811.*

[Readdressed] Horsham, Sussex.

Mr. Timothy Shelley apparently wrote to inform Bysshe of the death of his aunt, Mrs. Sidney, who was the wife of Timothy's half-brother, afterwards Sir John Shelley-Sidney of Penshurst. He also seems to have given some paternal counsel on the subject of attending College lectures. In the following letter, perhaps the last addressed to his father on an entirely friendly footing, Bysshe reassured him that he was on the right road, and that, whatever doubts he might himself entertain, there was no fear of him trying to convert the University. Mr. Shelley had suggested that Bysshe should enter into competition for the Prize Poem, the subject being "Parthenon." In

## Shelley in England

order to help him, "he had induced a distinguished scholar, a considerable antiquary and an eminent man, the Rev. Edward Dallaway, vicar of Leatherhead, secretary to the Earl Marshal, and the historian of the county of Sussex, to furnish a long letter, accompanied with sketches and much valuable information relative to the subject." Bysshe actually began to compose the poem, but he was sent away from Oxford before the time arrived for submitting his attempt to the judges.<sup>1</sup> And in this reply Bysshe promised to meet his father's wishes, that he should submit his verses to Mr. Dallaway. The prize was awarded to Richard Burdon of Oriel College. In his letter to Hogg of July 28, 1811, Shelley offers some criticism on Burdon's poem, and says, "It is certainly admirable as an architectural poem; but do not let *me* be considered *envious* when I say, that it appears to me to want energy, since the very idea of my being able to write like it is eminently ludicrous. I wonder whether B . . . is a fool or a hypocrite; he must be the latter."

The whole of the letter is satisfactory, even to the sanguine news about the sale of *St. Irvyne*, and it shows that Shelley was anxious to please his father and resume the old footing of confidence.

<sup>1</sup> Hogg, vol. i. p. 317.

# Philosophic Doubts

*P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

OXFORD, 17th Feb. 1811.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I suppose that by this time you are at Horsham. I dress in black for the late Mrs. Sidney, her death was certainly a necessary consequence of her complaint.

Mr. Rolleston's logic lectures yet continue, as to divinity it is a study which I have very minutely investigated, in order to detect to my own satisfaction the impudent and inconsistent falsehoods of priestcraft, I am in consequence perfectly prepared to meet any examination on the subject: It is needless to observe that in the Schools, Colleges, etc., which are all on the principle of Inquisitorial Orthodoxy, with respect to matters of belief I shall perfectly coincide with the opinions of the learned Doctors, although by the very rules of reasoning which their own *systems* of logic teach me I *could* refute their errors. I shall not therefore publickly come under the act "De heretico comburendo."

I have not yet finished "Parthenon." I hope I shall make it a Poem, such as you would advise me to subject to Mr. Dallaway's criticism. *St. Irvyne* sells fast at Oxford.—I am, My dear Father, your very dutiful affect.

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed outside]

T. SHELLEY, Esq.

Field Place,

M.P. Horsham, Sussex.

On his return to Oxford, Shelley resumed his studies, and, although his mind was occupied, as we have seen,

## Shelley in England

with religious topics, he found time to take his walks with Hogg which had been interrupted by the vacation. In these excursions he would often stop to gaze at the children of the country people, and speculate on their future sorrows and sufferings. Hogg tells us that one day while he was strolling in the neighbourhood of Oxford he stopped to observe a pretty little gipsy girl of about six years, who, bare-legged and with tattered clothes, was busily employed in collecting empty snail shells. He "was forcibly struck by the vivid intelligence of her wild and swarthy countenance, and especially by the sharp glance of her fierce black eyes. 'How much intellect is here!' he exclaimed, 'in how humble a vessel, and what an unworthy occupation for a person who once knew perfectly the whole circle of the sciences; who has forgotten them all, it is true, but who could certainly recollect them, although most probably she will never do so; will never recall a single principle of any of them.'" A boy, a little older than the girl, who was in charge of her, then appeared and, signalling to his sister, disappeared with her. The intelligence of the children appealed to Shelley, who "compared them to birds, and to the two wild leverets, which that wild mother, the hare, produces." He encountered them again later, in their gipsy encampment, and on being recognised by the children followed

## Philosophic Doubts

them into the tent, with the agility and ease of one who had been accustomed to dwell in such narrow tenements.

A devoted student of Plato, he used to say that every true Platonist must be a lover of children as he truly was. His belief in pre-existence is shown by the following story. One Sunday, after Shelley and Hogg had been reading Plato together, they encountered a woman carrying a child in her arms on Magdalen Bridge. Without ceremony Shelley seized hold of the child, and its mother, fearing that he intended throwing it into the water, held it fast by the clothes. “ ‘ Will your baby tell us anything about pre-existence, Madam ? ’ he asked, in a piercing voice and with a wistful look.” As she did not reply, he repeated the question, when she said, “ He cannot speak.” Shelley exclaimed, “ But surely he can if he will, for he is only a few weeks old. He may fancy perhaps that he cannot, but it is only a silly whim ; he cannot have forgotten entirely the use of speech in so short a time ; the thing is absolutely impossible.” The woman replied meekly, “ It is not for me to dispute with you, gentlemen, but I can safely declare that I never heard him speak, nor any child, indeed, of his age.” After making some remark about the healthy appearance of the child, Shelley walked on, and with a deep sigh said, “ How provokingly close are these new-born babes ! ”

## Shelley in England

Hogg, who observes that Shelley was commonly indifferent to matters of dress, has recorded an occasion on which he showed an exceptional interest in a coat. Calling at his friend's rooms one morning at the usual hour, he found him standing in the middle of the room in a new blue coat with gilt buttons, while his tailor (who had promised to send home a new coat the previous evening and had not done so, to Shelley's disappointment) was now extolling the beauty of the garment. The tailor having departed, Shelley took up his hat and went forth with Hogg, who questioned the prudence of walking in the fields in such splendid attire. Hogg's fears were well grounded, for, in picking their way through a muddy farmyard, a mastiff which had stolen upon them unheard, and without so much as a growl or bark, seized Shelley by the skirts of his coat. Both Hogg and Shelley kicked the unwelcome beast off, but not before the skirts had almost been severed from the waist. Shelley finished the work by rending them completely asunder, and he appeared to be more angry than Hogg had ever seen him either before or since that incident. He threatened to return with pistols to shoot the unfortunate dog, and proceeded home carrying the skirts of the coat on his arm. But at length he stopped short and, spreading out the skirts on a hedge, he looked

## Philosophic Doubts

at them for a few moments and "continued his march."

When Hogg suggested that they should take the skirts with them, Shelley replied despondently, "No, let them remain as a spectacle for men and gods!" They returned to Oxford, and reached their College by the back streets. At Shelley's appearance his astonished scout inquired for the skirts so that he might carry the damaged garment at once to the tailor. But Shelley's pensive reply was that "they are upon the hedge." The scout seemed to be on the point of running forth instantly in quest of them, when Hogg, like a conjurer, drew the skirts from his pocket. In the evening, when they were sitting over their tea, the tailor brought back the coat, so skilfully repaired that it easily won Shelley's admiration.

Prior has printed in his *Life of Goldsmith* some of the bills of Mr. Filby who fashioned the immortal plum-coloured coat for the little Doctor. There is a precedent therefore for printing the following old tailor's bill for clothes supplied to Shelley, which has survived the usual fate of such documents, and especially as one of the garments mentioned in it appears to be that which figures in the above story:

# Shelley in England

1810-1811.

*P. B. Shelley, Esqr., Univ. Coll.*

*To Willm. & Richd. Dry.*

1810.

Nov. 1.	A Superfine Olive Coat Gilt			
	Buttns. . . . .	4	8	0
	A Pair Rich Silk Knitt Panta-			
	loons . . . . .	3	8	0
	A Pair Rich Silk Knitt Breeches .	2	12	0
	Two Stripd. Marcela Waistcoats			
	Double Breastd. . . . .	2	0	0
9.	Mending a pair of Breeches .			4
Dec. 10.	Mending two pair do. . . . .	0	1	0

1811.

Feb. 28.	1 Pair Patent Silk Braces	.	.	0	8	0
March 2.	A Pair mixt Double milld. Worsted					
	Pantaloons	.	.	1	15	0
	A Pair fine Blue Ribbd. Worsted					
	do.	.	.	1	16	0
14.	A Pair gloves	.	.		4	0
21.	A Pair do.	.	.		3	0
23.	A Superfine Blue Coat Velvett					
	Collr. & Gilt Buttns.	.		4	12	0
	A Pair Fine Worsted Pantaloons			1	15	
	A Pair Stout Cord Breeches	.		1	7	
	A Figd. Marcela Waistcoat	.		1	0	0
25.	Mending a pair Pantaloons	.				8
						<hr/>
						£25 10 0
						<hr/>

## Philosophic Doubts

The following receipt is annexed to the above :

January 11, 1813 [error for 1814]. Recd. of Wm. Whitton, Esq. for P. B. Shelley, Esqr. Twenty-five pound ten shilling for the acct. of Mess. Dry, Taylors, Oxford.

JOSEPH KENNERLEY.

£25 : 10 : 0.

The last item in this account bears the actual date of Shelley's expulsion.

## CHAPTER IX

### EXPELLED FROM OXFORD

*Political Justice*, its message to and influence on Shelley—His letter to Leigh Hunt—Shelley's prospects of entering Parliament—Mr. Hobbes and his poem *The Widower*—*The Necessity of Atheism*—Shelley learns printing—The object of the syllabus—"Jeremiah Stukeley"—The publication of *The Necessity*—Munday & Slatter—Rev. John Walker's advice—Shelley and Hogg expelled—Accounts of the transaction—They leave Oxford.

WHILE at Eton, Shelley had borrowed from Dr. Lind his copy of *Political Justice*; and the book no doubt formed the subject of many conversations and warm discussions between the old doctor and his young friend. Shelley was of an impressionable age; the influence of this work on his mind and character was powerful and lasting, and he acknowledged the debt in his second letter to Godwin.<sup>1</sup>

"It is now a period of more than two years," he wrote, "since first I saw your inestimable book on *Political Justice*; it opened to my mind fresh and more extensive views; it materially influenced my character, and I rose from its perusal a wiser and a better man. I was no longer the Votary of romance;

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Godwin, Jan. 10, 1812.

## Expelled from Oxford

till then I had existed in an ideal world—now I found that in this universe of ours was enough to excite the interest of the heart, enough to employ the discussions of reason ; I beheld, in short, that I had duties to perform. Conceive the effect which the *Political Justice* would have upon a mind before jealous of its independence and participating somewhat singularly in a peculiar susceptibility.”

On taking up the study of metaphysics with Hogg at Oxford, Shelley's interest in *Political Justice* was revived, as we find that he wrote, on November 19, 1810, to request Stockdale to send him a copy of the book. It is likely that he gave it closer attention at the University than he did during his Eton days, and that his reference to its influence in his letter to Godwin applies specially to the later period.

The primary effect of *Political Justice* on Shelley was to cause him to think, and he did not overestimate its importance as an influence on his character. It is not possible to understand Shelley's state of mind at this time without taking *Political Justice* into account. Among other things he was made to realise something about the wretched social condition of the poorer classes.

Offences against property have always been dealt with severely in England, but in the eighteenth century delinquents were punished with inhuman cruelty.

## Shelley in England

Thieves and suspected thieves were commonly hanged, irrespective of age or sex. The press-gang was in operation, and flogging in the Navy and Army of frequent occurrence. The cost of food was high ; wages were low and the hours of work long. Women, especially of the poorer classes, had practically no means of redressing wrongs, and children were permitted to toil without restriction as to time at dangerous occupations. Little boys, the younger the better, were sent up chimneys to clean them.

That such a state of affairs should prevail in Christian England had caused Shelley to blame Christianity. He also learnt something from Godwin's habit of stating the most unpalatable facts unflinchingly and in all their ugly nakedness. An uncompromising advocate of the liberties and rights of the classes that were unrepresented by Parliament and neglected by the Church, Godwin was one of the first to reawaken in this country, by his book, sympathy for the cause of the common people. *Political Justice* had appeared in 1793, the year of the Terror, while the sensibility of the public was easily moved. When this book fell into Shelley's hands in 1810, England had not only neglected to follow its lessons but had put it on the shelf, and Godwin was more widely known as the author of his novel *Caleb Williams*.

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But England was not entirely apathetic in 1811: the claims of a large section of the poorer classes were becoming more and more urgent, and these claims had their supporters, though some of them were little better than demagogues. Leigh Hunt, however, was a sincere, though perhaps not always a very tactful, champion of the people's cause, who week by week pursued, in his newspaper *The Examiner*, a course of warfare in favour of free speech and against the privileged classes. The campaign was not conducted without danger. Hunt disdained to mince his words, and on two occasions the Government had instituted prosecutions against him, both of which had failed. An article on Military flogging, which was reprinted in *The Examiner* for February 24, 1811, from a provincial newspaper, with the title "One thousand Lashes," had resulted in another Government prosecution against Leigh Hunt as editor, and his brother John Hunt as printer of the paper. But Brougham, who stoutly defended the Hunts, obtained for them a verdict of "Not Guilty."

We have seen that Shelley had begun to show an active interest in the cause of free speech by contributing to the fund in aid of Peter Finnerty, and he seems to have been hardly less interested in the prosecution of the Hunts. Full of enthusiasm, he wrote

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to Leigh Hunt as editor of *The Examiner*, from Oxford,  
on March 2 :

“ Permit me, although a stranger, to offer my sincerest congratulations on the occasion of the triumph, so highly to be prized by men of liberality ; permit me also to submit to your consideration, as one of the most fearless enlighteners of the public mind at the present time, a scheme of mutual safety, and mutual indemnification for men of public spirit and principle, which, if carried into effect, would evidently be productive of incalculable advantages : of the scheme the following is an address to the public, the proposal for a meeting, and shall be modified according to your judgment, if you will do me the honour to consider the point.

“ The ultimate intention of my aim is to induce a meeting of such enlightened and unprejudiced members of the community, whose independent principles expose them to evils which might thus be alleviated ; and to form a methodical society, which should be organized so as to resist the coalition of the enemies of liberty, which at present render any expression of opinion on matters of policy dangerous to individuals. It has been for want of societies of this nature, that corruption has attained the height at which we now behold it ; nor can any of us bear in mind the very great influence, which some years since was gained by *Illuminism*, without considering that a society of equal extent might establish national liberty on as firm a basis as that which would have supported the visionary schemes of a completely equalized community.

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“Although perfectly unacquainted with you privately, I address you as a common friend to *liberty*, thinking that, in the case of this urgency and importance, etiquette ought not to stand in the way of usefulness.

“My father is in parliament, and on attaining twenty-one I shall in all probability fill his vacant seat. On account of the responsibility to which my residence in the University subjects me, I, of course, dare not publicly avow all I think, but the time will come when I hope that my every endeavour, insufficient as this may be, will be directed to the advancement of liberty.”

Professor Dowden explained Shelley's reference to Illuminism as probably the result of his having read in the Abbé Barruel's *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire du Jacobinisme*, “how Spartacus Weishaupt founded the Society of Illuminists, not so many years ago, for the defence and propagation of free-thought and revolutionary principles; [and] he remembers how formidable that society had grown.”<sup>1</sup>

Not the least interesting portion of this letter is the passage dealing with Shelley's prospect of becoming a Member of Parliament, and with the danger which he desired to avoid of avowing opinions that would not be acceptable to the authorities at Oxford. The circumstances, therefore, that subsequently caused his

<sup>1</sup> Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 112.

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expulsion from Oxford were not the result of a deliberate plan on his part to bring about that misfortune.\* After he left Oxford he might still have entered Parliament had he chosen to become a party man, but the prospect had ceased to attract him; he probably recognised that he could not give his allegiance to any party represented in the House, where there was no place then for independent members.

Shelley frequently went into the shop of Munday & Slatter, the Oxford printers, in regard to his literary projects, and they, like Stockdale, becoming alarmed at the tone of his conversation, in the words of Mr. Henry Slatter<sup>1</sup> "used more than ordinary endeavours to reclaim the waywardness of his imagination," and they applied to Mr. Hobbes, a literary friend, to talk to him. This Mr. Hobbes "undertook to analyze" Shelley's arguments, and "endeavoured to refute them philosophically." Slatter tells us that, although Mr. Hobbes "appeared to make a strong impression at the time," Shelley at length declared "that he would rather meet any or all the dignitaries of the Church than one philosopher," and declined to reply in writing to the philosophical arguments of Slatter's literary friend. On turning to a poetical production

<sup>1</sup> "*Oxford*, a poem by Robert Montgomery. Fourth Edition. Oxford, 1835. With biographical recollections," to which Henry Slatter contributed a letter to the author containing some interesting reminiscences of Shelley.

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of Mr. Hobbes entitled *The Widower*, published anonymously in 1812 by Munday & Slatter, it is not difficult to see why Shelley refused to pursue the argument. One extract from this work will suffice, namely, that which he describes in his synopsis as "Vicious infidels addressed" :

"Deem ye my verse too serious—still too grave?  
Fain would my muse employ her calmer pow'rs,  
Persuasive reason's force, if haply she  
Might urge your heedless feet from erring ways,  
To tread reclaim'd in virtue's sacred path.

Say then, ye scoffers of religion, whose  
Dread laugh proceeds from deep depravity,  
And wicked hate of all that's good, rather  
Than from settled disbelief, resulting  
From evestigating, [sic] studious research;  
'Tis infidelity of heart, sensual  
Its character; not infidelity  
Of intellect, a principle of mind.—  
Say then, ye giddy votaries of vice,  
Who scorn alike the robe of sanctity  
And virtue's diadem, are nature's laws  
Unfixed and mutable? Can man, with all  
His boasted powers, arrest or change their course,  
In order t'effect some diff'rent design?"

The rest of the poem is no better, and it is therefore unlikely that Mr. Hobbes' philosophy was superior to his verse.

During Shelley's first term at Oxford he read, together with Hogg, several metaphysical works, such as Locke *On the Human Understanding*, and Hume's *Essays*.

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Of these works they prepared careful analyses which, said Hogg, although their joint production, were in Shelley's handwriting, and remained in his custody. From these papers he drew up, perhaps at Field Place during the Christmas vacation, the small "metaphysical essay in support of Atheism," in regard to which, as we have already seen, he had approached Stockdale. This publisher, so far from agreeing to issue the pamphlet, had promptly written in alarm to Shelley's father.

Stockdale having failed him as a publisher, Shelley either sent or took the manuscript to C. & W. Phillips, the Worthing printers, from whose press had issued his first volume of verse, the *Original Poetry of Victor and Cazire*. An interesting sidelight is thrown on the printing of this book and the *Necessity* by the extract from a letter of Mr. Barclay Phillips to Dr. Clair J. Grece, which is given by Messrs. Thomas J. Wise and Percy Vaughan in their introduction to a reprint of Shelley's pamphlet.<sup>1</sup> "The active member of the firm," they say, "was an intelligent brisk young woman, with whom Shelley was on very good terms." Mr. Barclay Phillips writes of her: "She was amiable and clever. She thoroughly learned 'the art and mystery of printing,' and did much of the printing herself. . . .

<sup>1</sup> *The Necessity of Atheism*. A reprint of the original edition. Issued by the Rationalist Press Association by arrangement with the Shelley Society. Watts & Co., London, 1906.

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At one time (eighty years ago) my Aunt Philadelphia Phillips lived with us at Brighton. I there frequently heard her talk of Shelley. She said he took great interest in the art of printing, and would often come in and spend hours in the printing office learning to set up the types, and help my cousin (the daughter)."

Shelley as a compositor, sitting on a high stool over the type-cases, is a character in which the poet has not hitherto been described. It does not seem, however, to be at all out of keeping with the trend of his mind that he should wish to master the details of typography. He was not satisfied with a theoretical knowledge of chemistry and electricity, but always took pleasure in practical experiments; he probably soon acquired an elementary knowledge of printing. It is not known whether he actually set up the type for the *Necessity of Atheism*, a very rough piece of work which might well have been the production of some 'prentice hand.

In getting his essay printed Shelley had a specific purpose. He had continued, Hogg tells us, his practice of writing to public men on religious matters, and his correspondence had increased, so that "the arrival of the postman was always an anxious moment with him." At Eton he began to address inquiries on subjects of chemistry anonymously, or rather that he might receive an answer, as Philalethes and the like; but as postmen do not ordinarily understand

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Greek, "to prevent miscarriages, it was necessary to adopt a more familiar name, as John Short or Thomas Long." He kept up the practice at Oxford, and he intended to utilise his little printed extract of some of the doctrines of Hume to assist him in his correspondence. "It was a small pill, but it worked powerfully": his mode of operation was to enclose a copy of the pamphlet with a letter bearing a London address, in which he stated "with modesty and simplicity, that he had met accidentally with the little tract, which appeared unhappily to be quite unanswerable." If this appeal secured a refutation, by way of answer, Shelley "in a vigorous reply would fall upon the unwary disputant and break his bones." Sometimes the attack "provoked a rejoinder more carefully prepared, when an animated and protracted debate ensued." He seemed to attach a potency to the three letters Q.E.D. with which the pamphlet concludes, and had often remarked to Hogg, "if you ask a friend to dinner, and only put Q.E.D. at the end of the invitation, he cannot refuse to come."

Although we are told that "he loved dearly victory in debate, and warm debate for its own sake,"<sup>1</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> Hogg (i. 275), who adds: "Never was there a more unexceptional disputant, he was eager beyond the most ardent, but never angry and never personal: he was the only arguer I ever knew who drew every argument from the nature of the thing, and who could never be provoked to descend to personal contentions."

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object of his inquiries was to endeavour to obtain an indisputable proof of the truth of his theories. His belief in Deism had failed, and he had become, as he told Godwin,<sup>1</sup> "in the popular sense of the word 'God' an atheist."

Shelley did not neglect to test the powers of his pamphlet, and he informed Henry Slatter,<sup>2</sup> a statement which is supported by Medwin, that he had sent a copy to every bishop in the Kingdom, to the Vice-Chancellor, and to other dignitaries, besides the heads of houses in Oxford, addressing them under the fictitious signature of "Jeremiah Stukeley."

Apparently the earliest public announcement of *The Necessity of Atheism* is that which appeared on February 9 in the *Oxford University and City Herald*, where the tract was advertised by its title and, it was stated, "Speedily will be published, to be had of all booksellers of London and Oxford." On the 13th of the same month Shelley wrote to Graham, evidently with reference to *The Necessity*, and said, "I send you a book, you must be particularly intent about it. Cut out the title-page, and advertise it in eight famous papers, and in the *Globe*, advertise the *advertisement* in the third page. I wish you to be particularly quick about it. I will write more to-morrow. Now can

<sup>1</sup> In his letter dated Jan. 10, 1812.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Montgomery's *Oxford* (4th ed., 1835), p. 168.

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only say silence and dispatch." There is another letter to Graham, with no more definite date than 1811, but it was apparently written after February 13, for Shelley says, as if he were cancelling his former request : " You need not advertise the Atheism, as it is not yet published, we are afraid of the Legislature's power with respect to Heretics."

Shelley's connection with the tract was soon known at Oxford, though to what extent it is not possible to say. However, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe knew about it on March 15, for on that date he wrote from Christ Church, " Our Apollo next came out with a prose pamphlet in praise of Atheism, which I have not yet seen."

That Sharpe knew Shelley personally is probable, but they had little in common, and there is no reason for supposing that they were more than acquaintances. The Rev. W. K. R. Bedford, the biographer of this minor " Horace Walpole," with rather more vehemence than was necessary, said that Sharpe while admitting the genius of Shelley's writings had for him " an intrinsic loathing." In a copy of Lady Charlotte Bury's *Memoirs*, Sharpe scribbled on the margin of a page containing an anecdote of the poet—" Mr. S. was a strange tatterdemalion looking figure, dressed like a scarecrow ; he had no credit for talents at Oxford, where he was thought to be insane."

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And in an undated letter, after 1819, he wrote: "I send you the *Cenci*, written by that wicked wretch, Shelley, and well written. I remember him at Oxford, mad and bad—and trying to persuade people that he lived on arsenic and aqua fortis." <sup>1</sup>

Slatter tells us that Shelley himself strewed the windows and counters of Munday's shop, without their knowledge, with copies of *The Necessity*, and gave instructions to their shopman to sell the pamphlet as fast as he could at a charge of sixpence a copy. Apparently little time was given for these operations, for a "judicious" friend of the booksellers, the Rev. John Walker, Fellow of New College, happened to drop in to the shop. The title of the pamphlet attracted his notice; after examining it he asked to see Messrs. Munday & Slatter; and at once drew their attention to its dangerous tendency. He counselled them to destroy the copies forthwith, which advice they agreed to adopt, and promptly proceeded with Mr. Walker to the back-kitchen, where the offending pamphlets were burnt. They also sent a friendly hint to the printers, C. & W. Phillips of Worthing, warning them of the danger of circulating the pamphlet and of the liability they ran of a prosecution by the Attorney-General, and advising them to destroy

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe*, 2 vols., 1888.

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every remaining copy together with the MS. and types.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime the booksellers had sent to ask Shelley to come to their house. He came instantly, and found that Councillor Clifford "of O.P. notoriety" was with them. The subject was broached by the booksellers and councillor, who all proceeded, "first by entreaties, and next by threats, to dissuade Shelley from the error of his ways, for the sake of himself, his

<sup>1</sup> The following letter, found among the Shelley-Whitton papers, was never sent. It is curious as showing that a prosecution was contemplated, and that Mr. Shelley was evidently alarmed lest other publications, similar to *The Necessity of Atheism*, should appear from Messrs. Phillips's press.

*William Whitton to C. & W. Phillips*

10 GREAT JAMES STREET, BEDFORD ROW,  
April 13, 1811.

GENT,—I have a publication before me intituled "The Necessity of Atheism," which was printed by you, and by which you have been instrumental to two young students of Oxford being expelled their college, and you must therefore know that you have done to them and to their families an injury for which no sacrifice within your power can compensate. I have been informed that a prosecution is intended against you, and my motive for writing this to you is to caution you against incurring further censure and responsibility, and heaping difficulties upon the two young men by any attempt to put to the press any other work from the same authors or at their instance. How you could venture to give publicity to such blasphemous work at the instance of a stripling only nineteen years of age, whose father and mother you must have known, without the least communication with them, must be a matter of astonishment and surprise to every one.

If you have in your possession any manuscripts for publication from the same author, it is my strong recommendation to you to retain them, and not to proceed in the printing thereof.—I am, your obedient servant,

WM. WHITTON.

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friends and connections ; all seemed of no avail—he appeared to glory in the course he had adopted.”<sup>1</sup> Slatter adds that Shelley’s conduct became so unguarded that he was suspected as the author of the pamphlet, and also of having sent a copy to the head of his own college. The distribution of the tract, as we shall see, was attended with serious consequences.

In the following passage from Shelley’s letter to Godwin, in which he sketched his early life, he also summed up his short University career, and related the cause which brought it to an abrupt conclusion.

“I went to Oxford,” he wrote, “Oxonian society was insipid to me, uncongenial with my habits of thinking. I could not descend to common life ; the sublime interest of poetry, lofty and exalted achievements, the proselytism of the world, the equalisation of its inhabitants, were to me the soul of my soul. You can probably form some idea of the contrast exhibited to my character by those with whom I was surrounded. Classical reading and poetical writing employed me during my residence at Oxford.

“In the meantime I became in the popular sense of the word ‘God’ an Atheist. I printed a pamphlet avowing my opinions, and its occasion. I distributed this anonymously to men of thought and learning,

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery’s *Oxford* (4th ed., 1835), p. 168.

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wishing that Reason should decide on the case at issue: it never was my intention to deny it. Mr. Copleston at Oxford, among others, had the pamphlet; he showed it to the Master and Fellows of University College, and *I* was sent for. I was informed, that in case I denied the publication, no more would be said. I refused and was expelled.”<sup>1</sup>

The Reverend Edward Copleston, who subsequently became Bishop of Llandaff, was a Fellow of Oriel and Professor of Poetry in 1811. From Shelley he probably received a copy of *The Necessity of Atheism* with a letter, and more vigilant than other recipients of the pamphlet he tracked its author to University College. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe<sup>2</sup> of Christ Church knew that Shelley was author of the pamphlet, and probably others at Oxford were equally well-informed. If any doubt existed in the minds of the Master and Fellows of University College, a comparison of the letter which accompanied the tract

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Godwin, Jan. 10, 1812.

<sup>2</sup> Another reference to *The Necessity of Atheism* is to be found in a letter written by C. Kirkpatrick Sharpe from Oxford, and printed in Lady Charlotte Bury's anonymous *Diary Illustrative of the Reign of George the Fourth*, 1838, vol. i. p. 88: "Meanwhile, be it known unto you that the ingenious Mr. Shelley hath been expelled from the University on account of his Atheistical pamphlet. Was ever such bad taste and barbarity known? He behaved like a hero, 'he showed to Fortune's frowns a brow serene,' and declared his intention of emigrating to America."—October 1811.

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with Shelley's handwriting supplied them with the necessary proof of identity.

Hogg's description of Shelley's expulsion is vivid, and must be given in his own words ; though written more than twenty years after the actual event, it seems to be fairly accurate, except that Shelley states that he refused to deny the authorship of *The Necessity*, a statement which Mr. Ridley's account also supports.

Lent term of 1811 was drawing to a close. Shelley and Hogg had planned a course of reading, and had agreed to meet at an earlier hour than usual in order to get through their studies before the vacation. On March 25, Lady Day, a fine spring morning, Hogg called at Shelley's rooms : he was absent, but soon returned, and in a state of agitation. Hogg inquired anxiously what was amiss, and Shelley exclaimed, after he had recovered himself a little, " ' I am expelled ! I was sent for suddenly a few minutes ago : I went to the Common-room, where I found our Master [Dr. Griffith] and two or three of the Fellows. The Master produced a copy of the little syllabus, and asked me if I were the author of it. He spoke in a rude, abrupt and insolent tone. I begged to be informed for what purpose he put the question. No answer was given ; but the Master loudly and angrily repeated ' :

" ' Are you the author of this book ? ' "

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“ ‘ If I can judge from your manner,’ I said, ‘ you are resolved to punish me, if I should acknowledge that it is my work. If you can prove that it is, produce your evidence ; it is neither just nor lawful to interrogate me in such a case and for such a purpose. Such proceedings would become a court of inquisitors, but not free men in a free country.’

“ ‘ Do you choose to deny that this is your composition ? ’ the Master reiterated in the same rude and angry voice.

“ Shelley complained much of his violent and ungentlemanly deportment, saying :

“ ‘ I have experienced tyranny and injustice before, and I well know what vulgar violence is ; but I have never met with such unworthy treatment. I told him calmly, but firmly, that I was determined not to answer any questions respecting the publication on the table. He immediately repeated his demand ; I persisted in my refusal ; and he said furiously :

“ ‘ Then you are expelled ; and I desire you will quit the College early to-morrow morning at the latest.’

“ ‘ One of the Fellows took up two papers, and handed one of them to me ; here it is.’ He produced a regular sentence of expulsion, drawn up in due form, under the seal of the College.”

Shelley “ sat on the sofa, repeating, with convulsive

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vehemence, the words, ' Expelled, expelled ! ' his head shaking with emotion, and his whole frame quivering."

Hogg, justly indignant, " so monstrous and so illegal did the outrage seem," was resolved to stand by his friend, and at once wrote a short note to the Master and Fellows asking them to reconsider their sentence. The " conclave " was still sitting when the note reached them ; Hogg was instantly sent for, and on his arrival he was asked by the Master, as Shelley had been, if he had written the tract. Hogg said that he pointed out the unfairness of the question, and the injustice in punishing Shelley for refusing to answer it. No one spoke except the Master, who told Hogg to retire and consider whether he was resolved to persist in refusing to answer the question : but he had scarcely passed the door when he was recalled. The Master again showed him the book, and again asked if he was the author of it. Hogg once more declined to admit or deny his responsibility for its publication, at which the Master exclaimed " angrily, in a loud great voice, ' Then you are expelled.' " As in Shelley's case, a formal sentence signed and sealed was handed to him, and he was told to quit the College at an early hour on the following day.

Peacock, in writing of the expulsion, stated that Hogg's account differed materially from that which Shelley gave of the transaction. " Making all allow-

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ance," he says, " for the degree in which his imagination coloured the past, there is one matter of fact which remains inexplicable. According to him, his expulsion was a great matter of form and solemnity ; there was a sort of public assembly, before which he pleaded his own cause, in a long oration, in the course of which he called on the illustrious spirits who had shed glory on those walls to look down on their degenerate successors. Now, the inexplicable matter to which I have alluded is this : he showed me an Oxford newspaper, containing a full report of the proceedings, with his own oration at great length. I suppose the pages of that diurnal were not deathless, and that it would now be vain to search for it, but that he had it, and showed it to me, is absolutely certain. His oration may have been, as some of Cicero's published orations were, a speech in the potential mood ; one which might, could, should, or would, have been spoken : but how in that case it got into the Oxford newspaper passes conjecture."

Peacock's statements are generally reliable, but the search which has been made for the report has proved fruitless.

These proceedings, as narrated by Hogg, can be compared with an independent account written by Mr. C. J. Ridley, junior Fellow of University College, who became Fellow in 1813. Ridley's letter, which

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is undated, describes the affair from his recollection some time after the event; and is now pasted into the College Register. He said that "It was announced one morning at a breakfast party, towards the end of Lent Term, 1810 [an error, it was 1811] that P. B. Shelley, who had recently become a member of University College, was to be called before a meeting of the Common-room for being the supposed author of a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*. This anonymous work, consisting of not many pages had been studiously sent to most of the dignitaries of the University, and to others more or less 'connected with Oxford.' The meeting took place the same day, and it was understood that the pamphlet, together with some notes sent with it, in which the supposed author's handwriting appeared identified with that of P. B. Shelley, was placed before him. He was asked if he could or would deny the obnoxious production as his. No direct reply was given either in the affirmative or negative. Shelley having quitted the room, T. J. Hogg immediately appeared, voluntarily on his part to state that, *if* Shelley had anything to do with it, he (Hogg) was equally implicated, and desired his share of the penalty, whatever was inflicted. It has always been supposed that T. J. Hogg wrote the preface. Towards the afternoon, a large paper bearing the College seal and signed by the Master

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*and Dean* was affixed to the hall door, declaring that the two offenders were publicly expelled from the College, for *contumacy in refusing to answer certain questions put to them*. The aforesaid two had made themselves as conspicuous as possible by great singularity of dress, and by walking up and down the centre of the quadrangle, as if proud of their anticipated fate. I believe no one regretted their departure; for there were but few, if any, who were not afraid of Shelley's strange and fantastic pranks, and the still stranger opinions he was known to entertain, but all acknowledged him to [have] been very good-humoured and of kind disposition. T. J. Hogg had intellectual powers to a great extent, but unfortunately misdirected. He was most unpopular." <sup>1</sup>

The Register bears the following entry: "*Martii* 25<sup>o</sup>, 1811. At a meeting of the Master and Fellows held this day it was determined that Thomas Jefferson Hogg and Percy Bisshe Shelley, be publicly expelled for contumaciously refusing to answer questions proposed to them, and for also repeatedly declining to disavow a publication entitled 'The Necessity of Atheism.'"

In this peremptory manner was Shelley driven

<sup>1</sup> First given by Professor Dowden in his *Life of Shelley*, and afterwards printed in the *Notebook of the Shelley Society*, Part i., 1888, pp. 99-100.

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from the University where his presence and that of his friend Hogg had become a source of discomfort to the dignified, wine-bibbing dons. Secure in their positions of ease, they were too indolent to rouse themselves to the effort of obtaining the confidence of the students, or of exercising their personal influence. Having been forced to take notice of the pamphlet, to which Copleston had drawn their attention, they chose the simplest course of dealing with the case, namely, of getting rid of the young men as quickly as possible. They devoted half an hour to their dismissal, after which they returned to their port and scandal, with the smug satisfaction of an unpleasant duty cleverly performed.

Hogg was told that, should it be inconvenient for them to quit Oxford immediately, they might remain for a time if Shelley would ask permission of the Master to be allowed to delay their departure. But he was too indignant at the insult that he had received to ask for any such favour.<sup>1</sup> Hogg says Shelley had never received any admonition or the slightest hint that his speculations were improper or displeasing to anyone. He was probably unaware of the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Walker, which were of a semi-official character. Shelley might have been amenable

<sup>1</sup> Hogg, vol. i. p. 287.

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to a reproof from the head of his college, and have submitted to the punishment of rustication ; at least Hogg seemed to think so.

So with heavy hearts Shelley and his friend bade a long farewell to Oxford, and to those hopes which some nine months earlier had seemed so bright. There was much at the University that Shelley appreciated. He enjoyed the comparative liberty of an undergraduate after the restrictions of Eton and Field Place, and the security from interruptions which "the blessings of the oak" ensured. "The oak," he said to Hogg, "alone goes to make this place a paradise." To Oxford he owed the pleasure of knowing T. J. Hogg, the companion of his long rambles and even longer conversations. To him he had remarked, "I can imagine few things that would annoy me more severely than to be disturbed in our tranquil course ; it would be a cruel calamity to be interrupted by some untoward accident, to be compelled to quit our calm and agreeable retreat. Not only would it be a sad mortification, but a real misfortune, for if I remain here I shall study more closely and with greater advantage than I could in any other situation that I can conceive. I regret only that the period of our residence is limited to four years ; I wish they would revive, for our sake, the old term of six and seven years."

The election of Lord Grenville to the Chancellor-

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ship of the University, some months before Shelley went up to Oxford, had given rise to bitter feuds. This feeling had died down, but some of it probably still lingered during Shelley's time. Shelley, like his father, was a Grenvillite, and the winning competitor had also received the support of the undergraduates. Lord Grenville's liberalism was odious to the dons, who equally disliked him for his disposition to favour Catholic emancipation. The defeated candidate, Lord Eldon, was a member of University College, and Hogg implies that Shelley was "regarded from the beginning with jealous care" because he delighted in Lord Grenville's policy. The opinions of an undergraduate on such matters are unlikely to have interested the authorities, although Shelley's liberal views on politics and religion, as well as his eccentric habits, undoubtedly excited attention.

## CHAPTER X

### POLAND STREET

Shelley leaves Oxford with Hogg and arrives in London—Takes lodgings in Poland Street—Visits the Groves—Acquaints Medwin of his expulsion—Kensington Gardens—Dr. Abernethy's anatomy lectures—Mr. Shelley's letter to Hogg—Bysshe writes to his father—Mr. Shelley in London—His conditions—which Bysshe rejects—Mr. Shelley and Mr. Hogg—R. Clarke—Bysshe and Hogg dine with Mr. Shelley—Mr. William Whitton—Mr. Hurst's fruitless intervention—Robert Parker and John Grove talk to Bysshe—Hogg and Bysshe offer proposals—Sir Bysshe Shelley's opinion—Bysshe's place filled at Oxford—Hogg leaves London—Bysshe offers to renounce his interest in the entail—Angry correspondence with Whitton.

SHELLEY and Hogg decided to leave Oxford without delay, and after breakfasting on the following morning, March 26, they took their places on the outside of the coach for London. It is stated that Shelley had no money wherewith to defray the expenses of his journey and that he obtained a loan of £20 for that purpose from Slatter, a brother of the Oxford bookseller.<sup>1</sup> A lodging for the night was found at a

<sup>1</sup> Henry Slatter stated in his contribution to Montgomery's *Oxford*, 4th ed., that Shelley gave a written memorandum that he had borrowed this sum from Slatter, who subsequently was unable to obtain its repayment. Among the Shelley-Whitton papers there are two receipts signed by Shelley, for ten pounds each from Slatter, and dated respectively March 12 and 23, 1811. As both of these dates are anterior to the expulsion which occurred on March 25, they probably relate to another transaction.

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coffee-house near Piccadilly ; and having dined, they proceeded for tea to the house of Shelley's cousins, the Groves, at Lincoln's Inn Fields. The cousins appeared to Hogg taciturn people, and Shelley's attempts at conversation were not successful in dispelling their reserve. This is hardly surprising considering that Bysshe was Harriet Grove's rejected suitor, and, if he gave the reasons for the sudden appearance of himself and his friend in London, it would have more than accounted for his cousins' silence.

The next day Hogg and Shelley went in search of lodgings, and it proved no easy quest, for Bysshe was difficult to please. He objected to the street cries at one house, and the landlady or the maid at others, but at last they came to Poland Street, off Oxford Street, which captivated the poet, as it reminded him of Jane Porter's novel, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, "and of freedom." They halted at a house where lodgings were announced in the window, and there they engaged apartments.

The sitting-room on the first floor especially attracted Shelley's fancy. It was somewhat dark and quiet, but the walls were covered with a gay paper of "trellises, vine-leaves with their tendrils, and huge clusters of grapes, green and purple, all represented in lively colours." Shelley found this delightful, and touching

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the walls said, "We must stay here ; stay for ever !" His bedroom, which opened out of the sitting-room, was papered with the same trellis of vines, and, while touching and admiring it, he asked if grapes really grew in that manner anywhere. Hogg, with his practical mind for creature comforts, ordered a fire, and they then fetched their luggage in a hackney coach.

Probably one of Shelley's first thoughts when he arrived in London was to carry the tidings of his misfortune to Medwin, who says : "I remember, as if it occurred yesterday, his knocking at my door in Garden Court, in the Temple, at four o'clock in the morning, the second day after his<sup>x</sup> expulsion. I think I hear his cracked voice, with his well-known pipe—'Medwin, let me in, I am expelled' ; here followed a sort of loud, half-hysterical laugh, and a repetition of the words—'I am expelled,' with the addition of 'for Atheism.' Though greatly shocked I was not much surprised at the news, having been led to augur such a close to his collegiate career from the Syllabus and *The Posthumous Works of Peg Nicholson* which he had sent me."<sup>1</sup> Medwin adds that he visited Shelley at his lodgings and took with

<sup>1</sup> Medwin's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. pp. 147-8. I have used Professor Dowden's copy of this book, corrected from the author's revised copy, in which he had substituted the last five words for Medwin's original "and the bold avowal of his scepticism." This correction also appears in Mr. H. Buxton Forman's new and revised edition of Medwin's *Life of Shelley*.



*From a drawing by D. Collins.*

**15 POLAND STREET, OXFORD STREET**



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him frequent walks in the parks, and on the banks of the Serpentine, where the poet indulged in his recreation of making "ducks and drakes" and sailing paper-boats. He also relates a story (to illustrate Shelley's habit of somnambulism) of being in Leicester Square one morning at five o'clock, when he was attracted by a group of boys collected round a well-dressed person lying near the rails. On coming up to them, his curiosity being excited, he recognised "Shelley, who had unconsciously spent part of the night *sub dio*." He could give no account how he got there.<sup>1</sup>

Shelley's daily walks with Hogg, which had formed such a pleasurable part of his Oxford days, were resumed. When on these rambles they would dine at any coffee-house wherever they might chance to be at dinner-time, and return for tea at their rooms. Occasionally they would take tea or dine at Bysshe's cousins, the Groves, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, or would visit Medwin at Garden Court, Temple. The Groves often accompanied Bysshe and Hogg on their walks, and John Grove, the surgeon, took them one Sunday morning into Kensington Gardens, where

It is noticeable that Medwin, in the Memoir prefixed to *The Shelley Papers*, 1833, states that Shelley's visit occurred "in the *morning after* his expulsion," and that he had "been led, from the *tenour of his letters*, to anticipate some such end to his collegiate career." The italics are mine.

<sup>1</sup> Medwin's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 151.

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neither Bysshe nor Hogg had been before. "Bysshe was charmed with the sylvan and somewhat neglected aspect of the place, and they soon became a favourite resort. He was especially delighted with the more retired parts of the gardens, and more particularly with one dark nook where there were many old yew trees."<sup>1</sup> Another resort was St. James's Park, where Bysshe used to express great indignation at the sight of the soldiers, as he believed that the maintaining of a standing army was likely to fetter the minds of the people. Charles Grove, at the time, was a medical student, and was attending Mr. Abernethy's anatomy lectures. The study of anatomy, especially after some conversations with John Grove, appealed to Bysshe, and he attended a course of lectures at St. Bartholomew's Hospital with Charles Grove, who, in recalling the incident many years later, thought that Hogg also occasionally went with them. Apparently Bysshe at one time had serious intentions of doing more than merely to study anatomy. In his letter of October 8, 1811, he wrote to Miss Hitchener, "When last I saw you I was about to enter into the profession of physic."

Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* had appeared some two years previously and had created a sensation, but neither Bysshe nor Hogg had seen it. One day Bysshe came across the satire in an Oxford

<sup>1</sup> Hogg, vol. i. p. 301.

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Street bookshop, and having bought it took the volume with him on one of his country walks with Hogg. He read the whole poem aloud "with fervid and exulting energy," and was delighted with the "bitter, wrathful satire." Hogg seemed to think that this was Bysshe's first introduction to the poetry of Byron, but, as some of his lines in *St. Irvyne* plainly show, he must at one time have been familiar with *Hours of Idleness*.<sup>1</sup>

Bad news travels apace, and Mr. Timothy Shelley would have been informed by the College authorities at once of his son's disgrace. Apparently the first step that he took was to write the following note to Hogg, who, as Bysshe's companion in misfortune, was no longer a welcome visitor :

FIELD PLACE, *March 27, 1811.*

SIR,—The invitation, my son wrote me word, that you would accept to spend the Easter vacation at Field Place,—I am sorry to say the late occurrence at University College must of necessity preclude me that pleasure, as I shall have to bear up against the Affliction that such a business has occasioned.—I am, your very humble servant,

T. SHELLEY.

<sup>1</sup> "Shades of the dead ! have I not heard your voices  
Rise on the night-rolling breath of the gale ?"

BYRON'S "Lachin y Gair," *Hours of Idleness*, 1807.

"Ghosts of the dead ! have I not heard your yelling  
Rise on the night-rolling breath of the blast ?"

SHELLEY in *St. Irvyne*, 1811.

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Three days had elapsed since his expulsion, while Bysshe must have pondered over the inevitable letter which he would have to write to his father, and on the fourth day he accomplished it.

The letter, which was addressed from the lodgings of his friend Edward Graham at Vine Street, Piccadilly, is a credit to Shelley, who, with perhaps too much frankness, enclosed with it a copy of *The Necessity of Atheism* for his father's perusal. The pamphlet is still in existence, and bears the word "Impious" on the fly-leaf in the bold handwriting of Timothy Shelley.<sup>1</sup>

### *P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

LONDON, *March 29, 1811.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—You have doubtless heard of my misfortune and that of my friend Mr. Hogg:—it gives me great regret to be deprived of the advantages which Oxford held out to me, but still more when I consider the vivid sympathy which you always have evinced for my errors and distresses and which I now fear must be greatly excited.

The case was this:—You well know that a train of reasoning and not any great profligacy has induced me to disbelieve the scriptures:—this train myself and my friend pursued, we found to our surprise that

<sup>1</sup> An allusion has already been made, on a previous page, to the fact that at one time there was some talk of prosecuting the publisher of *The Necessity*. Bysshe was evidently aware that this step was contemplated, as he wrote on May 15, 1811, to Hogg, "All danger about prosecution is over; it was *never* more than a hum."

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(strange as it may appear) the proofs of an existing Deity were as far as we had observed defective.

We therefore embodied our doubts on the subject and arranged them methodically in the form of "The Necessity of Atheism," thinking thereby to obtain a satisfactory or an unsatisfactory answer from men who had made Divinity the study of their lives.

How then were we treated? not as our fair, open, candid conduct might demand, no argument was publicly brought forward to disprove our reasoning, and it at once demonstrated the weakness of their cause, and their inveteracy on discovering it, when they publicly expelled myself and my friend. It may be here necessary to mention that at first *I* only was suspected. I was summoned before a common Hall, and refusing to disavow the publication was expelled. My friend Mr. Hogg insisted on sharing the same fate as myself; the result of their proceedings therefore is, that we are both expelled. I know too well that your feeling mind will sympathise too deeply in my misfortunes, I hope it will alleviate your sorrow to know that for *myself* I am perfectly indifferent to the late tyrannical violent proceedings of Oxford. Will you present my affectionate duty to my Mother, my love to Elizabeth. I will not write to-day but should be happy to hear from them. May I turn your attention to the advertisement which surely deserved an *answer* not expulsion.—Believe me, my dear Father, ever most affectionately, dutifully yours,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

GRAHAM'S.

As soon as Mr. Shelley received Bysshe's letter he must have bustled up to London, and taken his usual

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rooms at Miller's Hotel, over Westminster Bridge. From Graham he would have obtained information as to the whereabouts of Bysshe, whom he appears to have seen on Sunday, March 31. Bysshe's ingenuous invitation to his father to discuss the subject of the syllabus by drawing his attention to the advertisement <sup>1</sup> prefixed to *The Necessity of Atheism* was probably not ignored by Mr. Shelley, and he most likely endeavoured to obtain a full account of the expulsion. He attempted to persuade his son to write an apology to the authorities of University College, but in this attempt he failed. Bysshe was evidently sincere in his expressions of sorrow for causing his father pain, but he had confessed himself indifferent to the "late tyrannical proceedings of Oxford," and the idea of being constrained to apologise must have struck him as another attempt at tyranny.

Having meditated on his talk with Bysshe for some days, Mr. Shelley wrote him one of his oddly phrased letters. He was undoubtedly anxious to reclaim his son, but with his passion for laying down the law, he could not forgive him without making conditions.

<sup>1</sup> "Advertisement. As a love of truth is the only motive which actuates the Author of this little tract, he earnestly entreats that those of his readers who may discover any deficiency in his reasoning, or may be in possession of proofs which his mind could never obtain, would offer them, together with their objections to the Public, as briefly, as methodically, as plainly as he has taken the liberty of doing. Thro' deficiency of proof.—AN ATHEIST."

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*Timothy Shelley to P. B. Shelley*

MILLER'S HOTEL, *April 5, 1811.*

MY DEAR BOY,—I am unwilling to receive and act on the information you gave me on Sunday, as the ultimate determination of your mind.

The disgrace which hangs over you is most serious, and though I have felt as a father, and sympathized in the misfortune which your criminal opinions and improper acts have begot : yet, you must know, that I have a duty to perform to my own character, as well as to your younger brother and sisters. Above all, my feelings as a Christian require from me a decided and firm conduct towards you.

If you shall require aid or assistance from me—or any protection—you must please yourself to me :

1st. To go immediately to Field Place, and to abstain from all communication with Mr. Hogg, for some considerable time.

2nd. That you shall place yourself under the care and society of such gentlemen as I shall appoint, and attend to his instructions and directions he shall give.

These terms are so necessary to your well-being, and to the value, which I cannot but entertain. that you may abandon your errors and present unjustifiable and wicked opinions, that I am resolved to withdraw myself from you, and leave you to the punishment and misery that belongs to the wicked pursuit of an opinion so diabolical and wicked as that which you have dared to declare, if you shall not accept the proposals I shall go home on Thursday.—I am, your affectionate and most afflicted Father,

T. SHELLEY.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From Hogg's *Life of Shelley*.

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It is not unlikely that Bysshe might have agreed to his father's conditions but for the request that he should give up Hogg. This he could not bring himself to do ; apart from his regard for Hogg, he was too loyal to throw over the friend who had willingly shared with him the onus of his expulsion from the University. The mere proposal was sufficient to raise Bysshe's hot temper, and it is not difficult to detect the scornful tone which underlies his polite reply to his father's letter.

### *P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

POLAND STREET (*after April 5, 1811*).

MY DEAR FATHER,—As you do me the honour of requesting to hear the determination of my mind as to the basis of your future acts I feel it my duty, although it gives me pain to wound “the sense of duty to your own character, to that of your family and your feelings as a Christian” decidedly to refuse my assent to both the proposals in your letter and to affirm that similar refusals will always be the fate of similar requests.

With many thanks for your great kindness.—I remain, your affectionate dutiful son,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.<sup>1</sup>

On April 5, the same day that he wrote to Bysshe, Mr. Timothy Shelley addressed a letter to Hogg's

<sup>1</sup> From Dowden's, *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 130.

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father "on the subject of the unfortunate affair that has happened to my son and yours at University College, Oxford." He went on to say that he had endeavoured to part the young men, by directing Bysshe to return home, and giving the same advice to T. J. Hogg. "Backed up in that opinion by men of rank and influence," he suggested that Mr. Hogg senior should come to London and help him to carry out his purpose. "They are now at No. 15 Poland Street, Oxford Road. . . . These youngsters must be parted and the fathers must exert themselves. The favour of your answer will oblige." Poor Mr. Shelley, who was making a shot in the dark, addressed this letter to Stockton-on-Tees instead of Norton, and being unacquainted with Mr. Hogg's Christian name, he said somewhat bluntly, "I am at a loss now to know whom I address, not being able to get the direction." He then added, by way of postscript, with his characteristic oddity of expression, "Sir James Graham tells me there are several of the name, therefore into whosoever's hands this comes will have the goodness to find out the right person."

After he had sent this letter to the post, with his mind thoroughly absorbed by his mission, and with anxious solicitude, Mr. Shelley discovered someone who was able to supply him with the name and address of Mr. Hogg, and to vouch for his respectability.

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Doubting whether his first letter had reached Mr. Hogg, he wrote again on the following day urging him to get his son to return home. "They want to be in professions together," he said. "If possible they must be parted, for such monstrous opinions that occupy their thoughts are by no means in their favour. I hope you have received my letter of yesterday, and will take immediate means of acting as you think proper. This is a most deplorable case and I fear we shall have much trouble to root it out. Paley's *Natural Theology* I shall recommend my young man to read, it is extremely applicable. I shall read it with him. A father so employed, must impress his mind more sensibly than a stranger. I shall exhort him to divest himself of all prejudice already imbibed from his false reasoning, and to bring a willing mind to a work so essential to his own and his family's happiness. I understand you have more children. God grant they may turn out well, and this young man see his error.—I remain, your obedient and afflicted fellow-sufferer, T. SHELLEY." <sup>1</sup>

Mr. John Hogg entrusted to his friend Mr. R. Clarke (the Earl of Bridgwater's agent) the task of dealing with his son. And Mr. Clarke, who was on the spot in London, with an address in New Bond Street, apparently was soon in a position to throw some light

<sup>1</sup> From Hogg's *Life of Shelley*.

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on the expulsion at Oxford. The following letter appears in Hogg's *Life of Shelley* above the signature C. R., which would seem to be Clarke's initials transposed.<sup>1</sup> I think one may assume that Clarke was the writer of the letter.

*R. Clarke to John Hogg*

*April 6, 1811.*

B . . . . . J . . . . . came to me this morning from Oxford, I have had the whole history from him : and the reason of all this strange conduct in your son and Shelley is what I supposed, a desire to be singular. There is no striking impiety in the pamphlet : but it goes to show, that because a supreme power cannot be seen, such power may be doubted to exist. It is a foolish performance, so far as argument goes, but written in good language. These two young men gave up associating with anybody else some months since, never dined in College, dressed differently from all others, and did everything in their power to show singularity, as much as to say, "We are superior to everybody." They have been writing Novels. Shelley has published his and your son has not. Shelley is son to the Member for Shoreham. He has always been odd, I find, and suspected of insanity : but of great acquirements : so is your son : I mean, as to the latter, he is of high repute in College.

C. R.

To JOHN HOGG,  
Norton.

<sup>1</sup> Hogg's exasperating habit of suppressing or altering names and initials in his *Life of Shelley* is sufficiently well known.

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On Sunday, April 7, Hogg accompanied Bysshe to dine with his father, by invitation, at Miller's Hotel. After an early breakfast the two young men went for their usual long walk, and reached the hotel at the appointed hour of five. Bysshe had spoken of his father's strange habits and manner to Hogg, who took the description to be an exaggerated one, but he assured him it was not. Hogg's amusing account of the humorous side of the dinner loses nothing in the telling: it reads like a comic episode out of one of Peacock's fantastic novels, and it was probably highly overdrawn. He says that Mr. Timothy Shelley received him "kindly, but he presently began to talk in an odd unconnected manner; scolding, crying, swearing, and then weeping again." They dined well, and after the meal, when Bysshe had been sent out on some errand for his father, he said to Hogg:

"You are a very different person, sir, from what I expected to find; you are a nice, moderate, reasonable, pleasant gentleman. Tell me what you think I ought to do with my poor boy? He is rather wild, is he not? If he had married his cousin, he would perhaps have been less so. He would have been steadier. He wants someone to take care of him: a good wife. What if he were married?"

Hogg admitted the wisdom of this suggestion, but Mr. Shelley declared it impossible, as he feared that

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if he were to tell Bysshe to marry he would refuse. Hogg suggested that it would be better to bring him into contact with some young lady likely to make him a suitable wife, without mentioning anything about marriage, and if he did not take a fancy to her he could try another. Old Mr. Graham, the father of Mr. Shelley's protégée, who acted as his factotum, was present. He interposed, and said he thought the plan an excellent one, and for some time he and Mr. Shelley conversed in a low tone and went over a list of young women of their acquaintance. The conversation, however, was brought to a conclusion by Bysshe's return. Mr. Shelley then proposed some more port—better wine than they had been drinking—but, no one assenting, the civil and attentive Mr. Graham made tea.

“After tea our host became characteristic again,” said Hogg; “he discoursed of himself and his own affairs; he cried, laughed, scolded, swore, and praised himself at great length. He was so highly respected in the House of Commons: he was respected by the whole House, and by the Speaker in particular, who told him that they could not get on without him. He assured us that he was greatly beloved in Sussex. Mr. Graham assented to all this. He was an excellent magistrate. He told a very long story how he had lately committed two poachers: ‘You know the

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fellows, Graham, you know who they are. . . .’ ” Then Mr. Shelley said, “ There is certainly a God, there can be no doubt of the existence of a Deity.” No one expressed any doubt, not even Hogg who was chiefly addressed. Mr. Shelley declared that he could prove it in a moment, and consenting to read his argument took from his pocket a sheet of letter paper and began to read. “ Bysshe, leaning forward, listened with profound attention. ‘ I have heard this argument before,’ he said.” They were Paley’s arguments, as Hogg remarked. Mr. Shelley admitted as much and observed, turning towards Hogg, “ Yes ! you are right, sir, they are Paley’s arguments ; I copied them out of Paley’s book this morning for myself : but Paley had them originally from me ; almost everything in Paley’s book he had from me.”

The time had now arrived for Bysshe and Hogg to depart. Mr. Shelley shook hands with Hogg in a very friendly manner, and said, “ ‘ I am sorry you would not have any more wine, I should have liked much to have drunk a bottle of the old wine with you. Tell me the truth, I am not such a bad fellow after all, am I ? ’ ”

“ ‘ By no means.’ ”

“ ‘ Well, when you come to see me at Field Place you will find that I am not.’ ”

Thus Hogg and Mr. Shelley parted, and they never met again. Hogg said of Mr. Shelley : “ I have some-

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times thought that if he had been taken the right way things might have gone better ; but this his son Bysshe could never do, for his course, like that of true love, was not to run smooth." This was, unhappily, only too true, but the blame was not entirely Bysshe's. Had Mr. Shelley been content to trust to his own judgment, wrong-headed as it often was, instead of seeking the advice of his family lawyer, a reconciliation might have been arrived at between father and son. Bysshe as a boy was fond of his father. His sisters remembered on some occasion when Mr. Shelley was ill, "seeing their brother (who was then about fourteen years of age) several times a day watching and listening at the door of the sick-room to try to discover how his father was getting on." <sup>1</sup> And this is not the only indication that we have of the boy's affection for his father. He may have thought him absurd at times, and said so in his letters with boyish priggishness, but he was not always unfilial. They were both eccentric, and, though Mr. Shelley lacked the genius of his son, they would probably have come to an understanding. Eccentric people are seldom entirely devoid of imagination, and Bysshe would have found some vulnerable spot in his father's mind or heart. But the thing became impossible when the older man endeavoured to adopt the hard and fast legal precepts of his solicitor,

<sup>1</sup> Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 459.

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Mr. Whitton. Mr. Shelley, suspecting his own weakness, sought the aid of this gentleman, and was thus able to make a show of possessing a hardness of heart which was new and unfamiliar to his son. The process of alienation, though gradual, was unfortunately sure.

On April 8, Mr. Shelley wrote from Miller's Hotel to Mr. Whitton :

"You observe how they are now determined and what materials they are made of—I shall and will be firm, for he begins now to cast off all duty so he did before, and I must make up my mind in affection—your most kind and friendly advice will be acceptable.

"I expect Mr. Hogg, he wrote to me to-day, and will call on me and see me I hope before he sees his Son. I understand he is a very gentlemanly man—and if he agrees with me no doubt but we shall bring these youngsters to reason."

We are not able to say exactly what was Mr. Whitton's advice to Mr. Shelley, but it is evident that they had a consultation ; Mr. Shelley decided henceforth to place the whole business in his lawyer's hands, and he promised to be guided by him and him alone. Declining to communicate with his son he sent on all his letters and those of any others connected with this affair to Mr. Whitton, who received his client's instructions to deal with them. There is, however, a passage in a letter, dated April 11, to Sir Bysshe Shelley which indicates pretty clearly what Mr. Whitton



WILLIAM WHITTON.

*From the painting by James Leakey.*

*By permission of the owner, Dr. W Shirley Arundell.*



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thought about the baronet's grandson. He says :  
“ I lament exceedingly the conduct of Mr. Percy B. Shelley—He is an extraordinary young man, and I greatly fear he will give much cause of uneasiness to his father. His impiety and effrontery in the avowal of it exceeds belief, and if anything can bring him to a sense of his duty it is the firm conduct in my opinion of Mr. Tim Shelley.”

There was a Mr. Hurst, a trustee of some of the Shelley estates, to whom Mr. Timothy Shelley's thoughts turned in his perplexity as a suitable person to treat with his son over this delicate matter. He lived at Horsham Park, and was consequently a neighbour of Mr. Shelley, who may have called on him there. Hurst evidently gathered that Mr. Shelley desired him to act, as he speedily approached Bysshe in regard to the proposals contained in his father's letter. The immediate result of this unexpected and unwelcomed intervention was a strong feeling of resentment on the part of Bysshe, who at once addressed an indignant note to his father :

15 POLAND STREET,  
*Wednesday mor. [April 10].*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I am astonished that you should employ such a man as Mr. Hurst as the medium thro' which you may communicate any proposals.—If any change in your intentions should have taken

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place I shall give respectful attention to their merits if addressed to me, 15 Poland Street.—Yr. affect. dutiful Son,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

T. SHELLEY, Esq.  
Miller's Hotel,  
Westr. Bridge.

“ I desired Mr. Hurst,” wrote Mr. Shelley to Whitton on April 11, on receiving Bysshe's note of protest, “ after I saw you to take no part in the business whatever—by a note left for him and in person as I accidentally saw him.” Mr. Shelley added that he had no intention to answer Bysshe's note, and then, by way of postscript, “ I have given no authority to Mr. Hurst, but the contrary.” In another letter to Whitton of the same date, Mr. Shelley said : “ I will, my dear Sir, now leave this young Lunatic to your management, as I shall go home.”

Although Mr. Shelley wrote to Whitton in his first letter of this date, “ I will thank you from henceforth to be the only person I shall apply to in this business from every idea of doing what is right,” he had already discussed the matter with others. Besides Hurst, he had seen during his visit to town his brother-in-law, Robert Parker (husband of his sister Hellen, the eldest daughter of Sir Bysshe Shelley), and discussed his troubles with him ; also with John Grove and R. Clarke, all of whom saw Bysshe under the

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impression that they were carrying out Mr. Shelley's wishes. Parker's letter which follows was undoubtedly written in good faith, but it is not clear what Mr. Shelley meant by the note which he added, for the benefit of his lawyer: "He is a very intelligent man. I desired him not to call on my son on any account, for I was fix'd and determined. I have the most hopes of Mr. Parker's getting him to retract these opinions." Perhaps he was anxious to keep up the part of the stern parent, but Parker having seen Bysshe he hoped that it would have a satisfactory result.

*Robert Parker to Timothy Shelley*

OSBORNE'S HOTEL,

*Friday afternoon (April 12, 1811).*

MY DEAR SHELLEY,—I have seen your son and his friend—Mr. Jno. Grove was there—Our conversation was long and not much gained by it—he expressed great satisfaction at finding you did not send Mr. Hurst to him—a pretty strong desire to be reconciled to his family but an adherence to his own points, and of course very little bending to yours, but an *expression of affection towards his mother and sister*,<sup>1</sup> and he said he should go to Field Place in ten days or a fortnight to see you and them, and try to effect a reconciliation—I engaged nothing for you, but urged abstaining from corresponding together upon that one subject as a duty he owed to your commands, and the reasonableness of it—

<sup>1</sup> The words "never to me" were inserted in ink at this point by Sir Timothy, who is also responsible for the underlining.

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He's a very accute [*sic*] reasoner and seems to be very fond of it—I have asked him to write to me, and he seemed pleased—I think a lapse of a fortnight and a visit to Field Place may operate considerably towards bending him to your arrangement, but conviction alone can alter his opinion—

Mr. Hogg said very little—My kind love to Mrs. Shelley and Elizabeth and John.—I am, Yours very affectionately,  
R. PARKER.

“ I go to Maidstone to-morrow.”

It would appear from this letter, and the next from his cousin the surgeon, that Bysshe was already a little home-sick, and that he wanted to see his mother and sisters who were cut off from him. On the other hand, he was not prepared to give up the fight.

### *John Grove to Timothy Shelley*

[LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, LONDON]

*Thursday night, April 11, 1811.*

DEAR SIR,—Since I saw you I have had several conversations with Bysshe. I am convinced that there is nothing he wishes more than to be on terms with you and all his family, but he has got into his head ideas which he will not be prevailed on to relinquish till he is convinced of their being wrong, he is, however, very willing to be put right. I have told him he ought to consider that your and Mrs. Shelley's happiness depend on his conduct, that he ought not to sacrifice everything to his own opinions and be entirely regardless of your feelings, and bid him think what a

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wretched life he must lead if he forced you to withdraw your support and affection from him, which I assured him you would do if he did not agree to your proposals. Mr. Hogg's father is now in Town and I believe at this minute talking with him, I think if he takes his son out of Town<sup>1</sup> you will find Bysshe inclined to agree to most of your proposals, if not to all. Bysshe considers himself at present bound by honour to remain with Hogg until he is reconciled to his father, if that reconciliation should take place this evening I have great hopes that he would then think of nothing but returning to his duty. I fully intended to have called on you this morning but was prevented by want of time. Bysshe expressed a great wish this morning to go to Field Place but yet he would not prevail on himself to accede to all your terms. His opinions I think may in time be changed ; he appears *to me* to be waivering already. I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Shelley and Elizabeth.—I remain, Yours sincerely,

JOHN GROVE.

The following was added in Timothy's writing :

“ Mr. Grove is a Surgeon, his father married Mrs. Shelley's sister. My answer was that I had plac'd the business in your hands to guard my honour and character against Prosecutions in the Courts.”

Hogg and Bysshe in the meantime had not been idle, but had put their heads together and had drawn up a paper of “ proposals ” with a view of coming to

<sup>1</sup> The idea that Hogg had influenced Bysshe for the bad seems to have been entertained pretty generally.

## Shelley in England

terms with their respective fathers. They probably realised that talking the matter over with Mr. Timothy Shelley and his emissaries was unlikely to lead to any definite results. These proposals they submitted first to Mr. Hogg senior, who had now arrived in London, and, having obtained his approbation, Bysshe sent them on to his father with the following note :

*P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

Copy.

15 POLAND STREET.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I enclose you a copy of the proposals which were submitted after the joint consideration of myself and my Friend to the latter's Father.

He has done us the honour of expressing his approbation of them with the consent of yours.

I do this with a real and sincere wish for coming to an accommodation which I respectfully hope will not now be refused.—Your obt. affectionate Son,

P. B. SHELLEY.

“The Parties will make to Mr. Faber any apologies that he or his friends may require.

“They will not obtrude Atheistical opinions upon any one whatever, they will refrain from publishing Atheistical Doctrines or even speculations.

“They will return immediately to their respective homes.

“The parties feel it their duty to demand an unrestrained correspondence.

“When Mr. T. J. Hogg enters at the Inns of Court

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or commences any other profession, that Mr. P. B. Shelley may be permitted to select that situation in life, which may be consonant with his intentions, to which he may judge his abilities adequate."

The document, which was endorsed by Mr. Shelley "Fine fellows these to presume to offer proposals," is not in Bysshe's handwriting. It was sent through the post to Whitton with the address in the handwriting of Mr. Shelley, who franked and dated it April 14, 1811. The copy of Bysshe's letter, and of the "proposals," are written on the same sheet of foolscap paper which bears a watermark similar to that on the paper used by Mr. Shelley in other correspondence from Field Place. It is headed with the word "copy" in Mr. Shelley's writing, and was evidently made by some member of the household at Field Place.

Besides Clarke, Mr. Hogg also sought the aid of another acquaintance, the Rev. George Stanley Faber, formerly Vicar of Stockton-on-Tees, near Norton where Mr. Hogg resided; he was then Rector of Redmarshall, Durham, four miles from Stockton. Faber had been at University College, Oxford, was at one time a Bampton Lecturer, and the author of some controversial works. His name was already familiar to Bysshe, who had described him, somewhat cynically, in his correspondence with the younger Hogg, as one

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of the Armageddon heroes who "maintain their posts with all the obstinacy of long-established dogmatism."

Faber wrote a letter on the subject of the expulsion to his friend, Mr. Hogg senior, who placed it in Clarke's hands. That this letter was shown to young Hogg and Bysshe is evident from the fact that they undertook in their "proposals" to apologise to Faber. The epistle was also read to Mr. Shelley, who wrote to Whitton that Clarke was sending him Faber's letter, "which will open more to your view."

In his conversation with Clarke, Mr. Shelley must have blustered out his belief that young Hogg had been the "original corruptor" of Bysshe's principles. The suggestion became known to Bysshe a day or two later when he and Hogg went to call on Clarke. This visit may have been concerned with the "proposals" which the two young men had drawn up and had submitted to Mr. Hogg senior for his approval. Bysshe, however, was determined not to allow his father's accusation to pass unnoticed, and he sent the following letter to Mr. Hogg to exonerate his friend. It was not until long after Shelley's death that Hogg, in looking over his father's old papers, came across, and read for the first time, this letter which contains so fine a proof of Bysshe's loyalty :

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*P. B. Shelley to John Hogg*

15 POLAND STREET,  
[April 1811].

SIR,—I accompanied (at his desire) Mr. Jefferson Hogg to Mr. C[larke] who was intrusted with certain propositions to be offered to my friend. I was there extremely surprised: no less hurt than surprised, to find, my father in his interview with Mr. C. had either unadvisedly or inadvertently let fall expressions, which conveyed an idea that Mr. J[efferson] H[ogg] was the “original corruptor” of my principles. That on this subject (notwithstanding his long experience) Mr. T. Shelley must know less than his son, will be conceded, and I feel it but justice, in consequence of your feelings, so natural, what Mr. C[larke] communicated, positively to deny the assertion: I feel this tribute, which I have paid to the just sense of horror you entertain, to be due to you, as a gentleman. I hope my motives stand excused to your candour.

Myself and my friend have offered concessions: painful indeed, they are to myself, but such as on mature consideration, we find due to our high sense of filial duty.

Permit me to request your indulgence for the liberty I have taken in thus addressing you.—I remain your obedient humble servant,

P. B. SHELLEY.<sup>1</sup>

To JOHN HOGG, Esq.

*Timothy Shelley to William Whitton*

FIELD PLACE, April 14, 1811.

DEAR SIR,—I communicated the whole business in regard to my son to my Father.

<sup>1</sup> From Hogg's *Life of Shelley*.

## Shelley in England

He very much approved of the decision taken by me and still consider'd I should be firm. As to Mr. Faber I know no more of than hearing his very long letter to Mr. Hogg once read over. I gave Mr. Hogg my letter and my son's disrespectful and undutiful answer and desir'd him to be steady and firm with his son and then they would be brought to reason from the evidence of their own senses. They never think of their offended and injur'd Parents' situation, but endeavour to treat by a flag of Truce, like two contending armies, disagree in some point, and then go to Battle again—I am rous'd into energy and a determined resolution not to give way to his insolent demand of corresponding with Mr. Hogg, or his chusing for himself what would not be admitted with his monstrous opinions at the Inns of Court. Perhaps a correspondence could not be prevented or the word of a person of such dreadful opinions could not be taken. I have enclosed you the letters, not having given authority to any person but yourself to relax from my letter, or even to say they went to him on my account, so that I will now beg the favour of your opinion how I am to act, whether to take no notice or write another letter that you shall think right I should do. I will very much thank you for your advice and anything I should now do for my own and Family's comfort, and you may depend on me. A gentleman just come here from London says he doubts the two . . .<sup>1</sup> articles having been known to . . .<sup>1</sup> excepting Mr. Hogg's Father.

Could you call on my son, or send to Mr. Hogg. Mr. Clark is his friend at No. 38-42, New Bond Street.

<sup>1</sup> Portion of letter missing, caused by removal of seal.

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Don't spare my Apostate Son though I know it is only obstinacy. This agitates me so that I cannot act for myself to my own satisfaction, and as my Father is so well pleas'd by your kindness I entreat the following this business up in the best manner you so well know how to act in it.—I remain, Yours very truly,

T. SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

WM. WHITTON, Esq.

No. 10, Great James' St.,  
Bedford Row, London.

Mr. Timothy Shelley having, as he says in this letter to Whitton, "communicated the whole business in regard to his son" to Sir Bysshe. The old baronet duly considered the case, and then delivered judgment to Mr. Shelley, and afterwards to the family solicitor in the following characteristic letter written in his trembling, crabbed handwriting, with its old-fashioned contractions :

*Sir Bysshe Shelley to W. Whitton*

[*Postmark* : HORSHAM, April 15, 1811].

DEAR SR,—Agree with you y<sup>t</sup> *P.B.S.* etc. are extraordinary characters, in my opinion there is but one way to bring them to their senses, not by remonstrance, not by treaty y<sup>t</sup> cant be with rebels se by *his* letter to his Father he is in a state of High rebellion. No terms but unconditional Submission can be admitted now, and y<sup>t</sup> is not likely to be the case whilst he is treated with. Now my plain unrefined Opinion is

## Shelley in England .

(I never deceive myself) let these two young men run their career without interruption, this in my opinion will bring them to their senses sooner than any thing.—

Very Hble. Servt.,

B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed in Mr. Timothy Shelley's handwriting] :

WM. WHITTON,

No. 10, Great James St.

Bedford Row, London.

T. SHELLEY.

Mr. Shelley also wrote on April 14 to Clarke, informing him that he had received Bysshe's letter with the "proposals." These "proposals" had been submitted by T. J. Hogg to his father, who had given them his approval subject to Mr. Shelley's consent. Timothy Shelley, however, declined to follow Mr. John Hogg's lead, or to be influenced by the letter of the "mild and benevolent" Mr. Faber, and he stated that he had considered it right to place his business in the hands of his lawyer, "to guard his honour and character in case of any prosecutions in the Courts." He thought that Mr. Hogg must be deceived, if he agreed to the proposals. Indeed, what right had "these opinionated youngsters" to dictate terms? Their demand especially for an unrestrained correspondence with one another was "undutiful and disrespectful to a degree." Mr. Shelley thought that Mr. Hogg could not "agree to such insolence," as he described the young men's stipulation that they should be per-

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mitted to choose their own professions. "Desire Mr. Hogg junior to inform you of our conversation last Sunday," Mr. Shelley added by way of post-script.

In replying to the above letter on the following day Clarke said that Mr. Hogg senior had "refrained from stating objections to a correspondence between the young men, because it did not appear to him that it could be prevented from being carried on through the medium of a third person." He assented to their correspondence in the hope that they might either dismiss or moderate their obnoxious opinions. They were recommended to exclude from their letters all religious subjects by Clarke, who took care to read to them from Blackstone and Burn what the penalties are for writing or publishing profane doctrine. Mr. Hogg had not felt himself justified to give or express any opinion with regard to Bysshe's idea of selecting law as a profession, which was plainly a matter for the consideration of Bysshe's family. T. J. Hogg was to be entered at one of the inns of Court, but Clarke, who was evidently himself in the law, did his best to discourage Bysshe from becoming a lawyer. He expressed the opinion that the young men might be led, but were not to be driven. With Hogg he had "endeavoured to apply mild reasoning and mild words : much more than his conduct merits perhaps," and had

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persuaded him to leave London with him on the following day. Clarke concluded his letter by adding that "your son, will not be supported or countenanced by his friend in standing out against you ; and I should be much inclined to think that some judicious friend might bring him back to you."

Clarke also sent a note to Whitton on April 16, informing him that young Hogg had agreed to go that evening to his friends in the north ; and that it was hoped that they might dissuade him from corresponding with Bysshe.

Hogg said, "I quitted Shelley with mutual regret, leaving him alone in his trellised chamber, where he was to remain, a bright-eyed, restless fox amidst sour grapes, not, as his poetic imagination at first suggested, for ever, but a little while longer. I left London at nine o'clock in the evening by the Holyhead mail, having dined with the grave companion of my journey at a coffee-house in Bond Street." <sup>1</sup>

On April 14, Mr. Shelley also wrote to his lawyer about Hogg's departure. "My son," he said, "will be left, as it were, in solitary confinement. I wish something could be done with the apostate." Bysshe's place at University College was now vacant, and Timothy Shelley's half-brother, John Shelley-Sidney, having given him the nomination to the Leicester

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 334.

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Exhibition at the College, he recommended Christopher Dodson, of Sussex, for the vacant place.

Whitton was by no means disposed to deviate from Mr. Shelley's instructions, and was determined not to spare his client's "apostate son." The lawyer was ill, and he seized the opportunity, while he was taking a few days' rest at his house at Camberwell, to lecture his client. "I saw Mr. Clarke on the proposals," he wrote on April 16 to Mr. Shelley; "I cannot form to myself a reason why you should relinquish your judgment to your inexperienced son and allow him to say what is most fitting for himself as tho' he alone was capable of judging rightly on the subject. Either you must have allowed your son extraordinary liberties or I think he would have hesitated greatly before he had penned such a proposal. Mr. Hogg's son is to do as his father directs him but your son proposes that you should now resign to his pleasure his future conduct in life. As to all the conditions about not writing or publishing Atheistical books, the punishment which attends such a conduct must be an effectual check. . . . In a few days and the first I am able I will use my endeavours to see Mr. P. B. Shelley."

It would appear from the following letter, addressed to Whitton on April 18 by Mr. Shelley, that, after his son's expulsion from Oxford, he had proposed that Bysshe should take a voyage to Greece. The idea,

## Shelley in England

suitable enough in any circumstances, was expressly intended to separate him from Hogg, who was regarded as a bad influence, and to divert Bysshe's mind from philosophical studies by new scenes and interests. Mr. Shelley had made the tour of Europe before he settled down to matrimony, and he probably recognised its benefits. It is not possible to say when this proposal was made to Bysshe, but he declined it; perhaps besides the reason given because his father imposed the condition that he should cease to correspond with Hogg. Mr. Shelley endeavoured to explain, in his simple-minded way, that Bysshe's waywardness could not have been the result of his exemplary upbringing.

"I cannot express the great obligations," said Mr. Shelley, "I feel towards your exertions on this unpleasant business of my Son. I can assure you that I never gave him Liberties that from his conduct you have reason to suppose I must have done: from six years of age he has never been kept *one day* from School when he ought to be there, and in his Holydays I read the Classics and other Books with him in the full hopes of making him a good and Gentlemanly Scholar.

"Now in what manner he has got all this Heterodoxy in a place fam'd for Piety and Learning I am at a loss to guess. If he even now expresses the least goodness of Heart, he will be very sorry that he has not seen that whatever a Parent had requir'd that he did not

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see it was sufficient, whose happyness has been so wounded by his conduct and opinions, which to speak most mildly of them, are not only extremely singular, but abhorrent in a Christian Society. He ought therefore to correct them, and not shut his mind against conviction in favour of such abominable opinions merely because he fancies his reasoning powers infallible.

“He cannot long continue in the same erroneous way of thinking, for in studied conversation I had with them on Sunday ye 7th inst. their tongues which obey’d their will in speaking the Fallacy are evidences against it.

“My son threw away the chance he had of going to the Greek Islands because he would not leave Hogg. Travelling would of course dispel the gloomy ideas which he has too long fix’d on objects, tending to produce Temporary Insanity, it would have rais’d his depress’d spirits to a proper height of vivacity, and by placing him constantly in the presence of real dignity, bring him naturally to reflect on his *own*. Such a scheme I am confident would effect what no abstract reasoning can produce, dissipate all despairing doubts, tranquilize his perturb’d imagination ‘et se sibi reddet amicum.’

“I am much concern’d for the trouble this occasions to all parties, it is so unpleasant and withal to steer the

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best course. I will do all I can so that no reasonable pecuniary allowance on my part shall be wanting.

“I shall hope to hear in due time all the success I can desire if possible; Home will not do long, as I must occasionally be away. He or Hogg has a Box which they call their Poison Box that should be burnt.”

Whitton kept his promise to Mr. Shelley and wrote to Bysshe, probably on Wednesday, April 17. He said that he had been very unwell for the week past, and was confined to the house, otherwise he would have called on Bysshe or have asked him to come to his chambers at Great James Street. As it was not his intention to go to London until the following Monday, he said that both he and Mrs. Whitton would be very pleased if Bysshe would come to Camberwell on Thursday or Friday and spend a couple of days with them. He added, “we may perhaps qualify the proposals made to your Father in a manner acceptable to him.” If it should happen that Bysshe were unable to accept the invitation, Whitton promised to see him at Great James Street on Monday at one o’clock.

Whitton wrote at the same time to Mr. Shelley: “I hope young Hogg has left your son as he will see by it how unsteady the mind is in its first purposes.

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. . . I have written to your son and invited him to come to this house and spend a few days. I shall if he accepts my invitation get more possession of his mind and perhaps be able to settle some plan for his future conduct at least for a time."

After Hogg's departure, Bysshe found his lodgings at Poland Street "a little solitary." He missed the society of his friend and his talks and walks with him, but he endeavoured to console himself by writing poetry and, in order to pass the time, he went to bed every evening at eight o'clock. A letter which he had written to Mr. Shelley had been intercepted by his mother, who perhaps thought it was not likely to improve the relations between father and son. Mrs. Shelley sent Bysshe some money and asked him to come home, but he was in no mood to return to Field Place, and he sent back the money. His solitary hours, however, were sometimes cheered by visits from Miss Westbrook and her sister Harriet—another Harriet who was to play an important part in the poet's life.

Bysshe was now losing patience over the negotiations with his father regarding the "proposals." He probably argued with himself that, so long as he continued to be his father's heir, he would have to submit not only to Mr. Shelley's authority, but to that of his

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grandfather and of the family solicitor. Bysshe's father was an example of what even an elderly man was expected to do who was heir to a wealthy baronet, and the prospect could not have been much to the young man's liking. He wanted to be free to act and live where he pleased, and he was willing to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage, if the pottage meant liberty. Moreover, Godwin, who hated vows and covenants as fiercely as Tolstoy, had pronounced against entails, and his opinion was in itself a sufficient reason for Bysshe's attitude.

Under the will of his great-uncle, John Shelley, Bysshe was tenant-in-tail of certain estates in Sussex, subject to the prior life-interest therein of Sir Bysshe and Timothy Shelley. Bysshe told Hogg, in his letter of April 18, that he had written to say he would "resign all claim to the entail," if his father would allow him two hundred pounds a year and divide the rest among his sisters: "Of course he will not refuse the offer," he remarked. As a matter of fact, Bysshe, being under age, was powerless to relinquish his rights. In the first of the following letters to Whitton, written before he received the lawyer's invitation, Bysshe asked for one, not two hundred pounds a year; all he wanted was an independent income, and with his inexperience of money matters, he was not emphatic about the amount.

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*P. B. Shelley to W. Whitton*

15 POLAND STREET,

[*Postmark: 4 o'clock, April 17, 1811.*]

SIR,—As common report and tolerably good authority informs me that part of Sir Bysshe Shelley's property is entailed upon me; I am willing by signature to resign all pretensions to such property in case my father will divide it equally with my sisters *and my Mother*, and allow me now 100£ per an: as an annuity which will only amount to 2000£, perhaps less.—Your obt. humble sert.

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

WHITTON, Esq.

Bedford Row.

It was not until after he had posted this letter that he received Whitton's invitation to discuss the "proposals." Although Bysshe was evidently aware that Whitton's letter was written before he received the proposal regarding the entail, he deliberately referred to it in the following note, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, that he was really serious in his offer to renounce what he believed to be his interests in the property.

*P. B. Shelley to W. Whitton*

15 POLAND STREET,

[*Postmark: 4 o'clock, April 18, 1811.*]

DEAR SIR,—I will do myself the pleasure of waiting on you in Great James Street at the appointed time.

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I should have been happy to have accepted your kind invitation <sup>1</sup> were I not confined within by a slight fever, which I calculate will soon be over. I do not exactly see how it is possible to qualify the proposals: I am perfectly willing and not only willing but desirous to give up all claim to the entail.

Pray give my best compts. to Mrs. Whitton, with wishes for your speedy recovery.—I remain, your hum. obt.  
P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

W. WHITTON, Esq.  
Grove House,  
Camberwell.

The letters that had passed, between Bysshe and Whitton, had crossed so rapidly through the post that the lawyer was obliged to make his position quite clear to the poet. Having received the letter in which Bysshe expressed his desire to renounce the entail, Whitton wrote first the stern reply printed below. Perhaps on reflection he realised that he had been too stern, and therefore followed it by the more or less friendly letter to say that on Monday he would be pleased to meet Bysshe and that his reference to the "proposals" in the letter containing his invitation was not to be taken as relating to the proposal for relinquishing the entail.

<sup>1</sup> In Bysshe's letter of April 18, 1811, to Hogg he wrote, "Yesterday I had a letter from Whitton to invite me to his house: of course the answer was in the negative."

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*W. Whitton to P. B. Shelley*

GROVE HOUSE, CAMBERWELL

[no date, ? April 18, 1811].

SIR,—I am not a willing instrument by which insult may be offered to your father and I must therefore decline acting in any manner under the paper you have sent to me. I most sincerely wish you to reflect on the tendency of the proposal you have thought proper to make before you offer it to your father's consideration.—Yours, etc.,

W. WHITTON.

Mr. P. B. SHELLEY.

*W. Whitton to P. B. Shelley*

GROVE HOUSE, CAMBERWELL,

April 18, 1811.

DEAR SIR,—You will perceive by the circumstances that my letter of yesterday was written without reference to the proposals you addressed by letter of yesterday's date. These proposals did not come to my hands until 12 o'clock this day, and I immediately wrote to you the only sentiment which the perusal of them begot. The proposals to which my letter referred were those you some days since sent to your father, and which he forwarded to me. I shall be happy to see you on Monday, and remain, your very obedient

W. WHITTON.

P. B. SHELLEY, Esq.

15 Poland Street.

Bysshe had no love for lawyers, and he was not likely to have been prejudiced in favour of his father's solicitor, of whom he may have suspected as influenc-

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ing Mr. Shelley in regard to the "proposals." Mr. Whitton's letter therefore was the very thing to cause Bysshe to give way to a burst of that violent anger which he was known to possess, and which on rare occasions he was incapable of controlling.

*P. B. Shelley to W. Whitton*

15 POLAND STREET,

[*Postmark* : 12 o'clock, April 19, 1811].

SIR,—I am not a likely person to submit to the imperious manner of address, of which this evening's letter is a specimen ; nor *am* I inclined to withdraw, nor *ever will* I be inclined to withdraw the proposal which I sent you. As therefore you seem to have much to do in this business on the part of my father, it is your duty either to go through with it, or to give it up. I never *will* withdraw that proposal: It is for my father's or rather my family's interests which ought to be the same that I make it. *Here* is no appeal to mercy, leniency, or favor. I have *not* found nor do I care to find either : but an appeal to justice, reason, humanity if you, if he were deaf to that nothing can be done.—I will not listen to the suggestions of family pride, to interest to fortune I am indifferent and I desire that when I am addressed again, a less authoritative manner be used, or subsequent letters are returned unopened.—Yr. humbl. sert.

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

WM. WHITTON, Esq.

Grove House,

Camberwell.

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Mr. Whitton was evidently taken aback at the violence of Bysshe's letter. In his reply, while he endeavoured to defend himself against the imputation of having been offensive, he had no intention to let the young man off without a few words of advice. He was at any rate able to convey to Bysshe the intelligence that as a minor he had no independent income and therefore could not relinquish it. Whitton's warning, however, that he would not see Bysshe or receive any more of his letters was no doubt received by the young philosopher with indifference.

*W. Whitton to P. B. Shelley*

10 GREAT JAMES STREET.

SIR,—I have just received a letter signed by you without a date. It was apparently written in great anger and the only reason I can give for such anger is that you did not understand the plain truth which I wished to communicate by my letter referred to, for I am sure I intended no offence. I have not estimated on situation as it seems you expected, and why you think it is my duty to be an instrument of insult I cannot guess. I know where to begin and how to practise my duties without your instructions, and it would be well if you would consider the duties most called for and now unperformed by yourself.

Why do you suppose that you are the one that can best provide for your father and mother and their families interests. I do not know that you have the value of 6*l.* to relinquish, and if you had you cannot

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dispose of it from the legal disability which your infancy creates, for I understand that you are only about 19. I will take a further liberty of telling you that it is your families present greatest misfortune that you think but slightly on subjects on which you think proper to write, and which immediately concern their and your future prosperity. You care not you say for Family Pride. Allow me to tell you that the first part of the Family Pride of a Gent is to observe a propriety of manners and a decency of expression in communication, and your forgetfulness on those qualifications towards me in the letter which I have just received induces me to say that you will postpone your intended call on me on Monday, nor shall I receive any more letters from a pen so unguarded and insulting.—Yours, &c., W. WHITTON.

[Addressed]

P. B. SHELLEY, Esq.  
15 Poland Street.

Whitton sent on to Mr. Shelley copies of the correspondence that had passed between him and Bysshe, but he withheld, on account of its "indecenty," the letter containing the proposal to relinquish the entail. "The Gent is very angry," said the lawyer, "and has thought proper to lecture me on the occasion." In consequence of this letter Whitton had decided not to give Bysshe "a personal conversation" because, he added sententiously, from "his pertinacity of opinion and inclination to insult he may call on me to turn him out of the house, which would hurt my feelings exceed-

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ingly.” Mr. Whitton thought that if Mr. Shelley allowed Bysshe to direct his future progress in life, that he would prove “an eternal scourge of discomfort” to his father. This letter was not calculated to put anything but the gravest complexion on Bysshe’s correspondence. Mr. Shelley was naturally alarmed, and he said, in announcing his intention of coming to London on Tuesday, April 23: “This misguided young man courts persecution, and which to him would be a favor.” On reading over the correspondence again, Mr. Shelley sat down and wrote at greater length to his attorney.

Both Mr. Shelley and his solicitor seem to have regarded and treated Bysshe as an *enfant terrible*, an impossible child, bent on destroying the peace of Field Place and its inmates, whose dangerous pranks were feared, enhanced as they were by the consciousness that they could not be restrained.

*Timothy Shelley to W. Whitton*

FIELD PLACE, April 22, 1811.

DEAR SIR,—From my very great surprise I could scarcely sufficiently thank you for the great kindness you was shewing to my unworthy son, and the Friendship towards me. I never felt such a shock in my Life, infinitely more than when I heard of his expulsion, for I could not then have thought it of so hideous [*sic*] a cast. Everything seems worse, for I had hop’d from

## Shelley in England

the seperation [*sic*], that as they could not comfort and support each other in the enthusiasm of their erroneous opinions, each would have been glad to have return'd home obedient to their Parent's Injunctions.

The insulting ungentlemanly letter to you appears the high-ton'd, self-will'd dictate of the Diabolical Publications, which have unluckily fallen in his way, and given this Bias to his mind, that is most singular. To cast off all thoughts of his Maker, to abandon his Parents, to wish to relinquish his Fortune and to court Persecution all seems to arise from the same source. The most mild mode of giving his conduct a thought, it must occur that these sallies of Folly and Madness ought to be restrain'd and kept within bounds. Nothing provokes him so much as civility, he wishes to become what he would term a martyr to his sentiments—nor do I believe he would feel the Horrors of being drawn upon a Hurdle, or the shame of being whirl'd in the Pillory.

I trouble you with this that I may not take up your time in relating it. I hear he has corresponded with Lucien B.<sup>1</sup> and it is thot he did with Finnerty. Perhaps I have not heard half. All these matters make me wish to come to some decision on which I can and ought to act towards a son in such dire disobedience, and act too for the real interests of comfort, and Happiness for the rest of the Family.

I shall be in London to-morrow evg. at Miller's Hotel, Westr. Bridge.—I remain, yr. very obedt. and much oblig'd Hbl. Servt.,  
T. SHELLEY.

<sup>1</sup> Is it possible that Lucien Bonaparte was numbered among Bysshe's correspondents?

## Poland Street

*Endorsed :*

MILLER'S HOTEL, *April 23, 1811.*

“ I was too late for the post, therefore send it by the 2d. Post. I will call this morning, but do not stay at home on my account. I will call at any time you will have the goodness to name.

I must attend some Committees on Thursday at 12 o'clk.

I hear he is woefully melancholy.

[Addressed : HORSHAM, *April twenty two, 1811*]

WM. WHITTON, Esqre.

No. 10, Great James Street,  
Bedford Row, London.

T. SHELLEY.

## CHAPTER XI

### HARRIET WESTBROOK

Mr. Shelley's attempt to make Bysshe a politician with the aid of the Duke of Norfolk—Bysshe's speech at the British Forum—His offer to preach for Rowland Hill—Captain Pilfold—Elizabeth Shelley's disaffection—Bysshe's allowance—Meets Harriet Westbrook—Her appearance—His acquaintance with her and her sister—Bysshe's loneliness—Views on marriage—Letter from Eliza Westbrook—Hogg's fears—Bysshe's return to Field Place—His mother and sister—Miss Ilitchener—Janetta Philipps—Hogg and Elizabeth Shelley—The Prince Regent's fête—Bysshe visits the Groves at Cwm Elan—He resolves to clope with Harriet—Mr. Shelley's suspicions.

AFTER Bysshe left Oxford the question of inducing him to take up some suitable profession had exercised the mind of his father. Bysshe had shown an inclination, like his friend Hogg, towards entering one of the Inns of Court. The bar, however, did not appeal to Mr. Shelley; the prizes such as had fallen to the Erskines, the Eldons, or the Broughams were few, and those contending for them very numerous.

Bysshe had said in his letter to Leigh Hunt, which is quoted in a previous chapter, that "on attaining twenty-one" he should in all probability fill his father's vacant seat in Parliament. Although the idea, since then, had grown distasteful to him, it

## Harriet Westbrook

had been decided by Mr. Shelley that Bysshe should become a professional politician, apparently without regard to his inclination or possible vocation. In the spring of 1811, therefore, while Mr. Shelley was attending the House of Commons, he endeavoured to persuade his son to give his attention to politics, and the Duke of Norfolk entered into the plan of bringing him in as member for Horsham. The Duke, a "*bon vivant*," as Professor Dowden says, "surrounded by men who kept the table in a roar, and a famous trafficker in boroughs," invited Bysshe to meet his father at dinner at Norfolk House to talk over the matter. In giving an account of the dinner to his cousin, Charles Grove, Bysshe expressed great indignation "at what he considered an effort to shackle his mind, and introduce him into life as a mere follower of the Duke."

He also related the incident to Hogg, who gave an account of the Duke's conversation which, if not exactly representing his words, is probably correct in substance. The Duke told him that he could not direct his attention towards politics too early in this country, and said, "they are the proper career for a young man of ability and of your station." With worldly wisdom his Grace pointed out the advantages of a political career, for, this being a monopoly, a small success would count because of the limited

## Shelley in England

number of competitors, and those for the most part without talent, or too indolent to exert themselves. The Church, the bar, and letters were otherwise, because the number of rivals is far greater. There none can win gold, though all may try to gain reputations, and it is a struggle for glory—the competition infinite without bounds—"a sea without shores." The Duke thus talked to Bysshe, said Hogg, many times, and strongly urged him to devote himself to politics without delay, but Bysshe was not to be persuaded. He expressed his unconquerable aversion from political articles in newspapers and reviews, and especially from political talk of which he had heard a good deal. Mr. Shelley had taken him several times to the House of Commons, and he was not impressed with what he saw there. "Good God!" he exclaimed, "what men did we meet about the House—in the lobbies and passages! and my father was so civil to them all."<sup>1</sup> When this plan failed, said Charles Grove, Mr. Shelley was puzzled what to do. If he had known what were his son's opinions on religion or politics he would have been still more puzzled.

Not long after this date Bysshe expressed his views in a letter to Miss Hitchener.<sup>2</sup> "In *theology*," he said, "inquiries into our intellect, its eternity or perish-

<sup>1</sup> Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> June 25, 1811.

## Harriet Westbrook

ability, I advance with caution and circumspection. I pursue it in the privacy of retired thought, or the interchange of friendship; but in politics—*here* I am enthusiastic. I have reasoned, and my reason has brought me on this subject to the end of my inquiries. I am no aristocrat, nor any “*crat*” at all; but vehemently long for the time when man may *dare* to live in accordance with Nature and Reason, in consonance<sup>1</sup> with Virtue, to which I firmly believe that Religion, its establishments, Polity, and its establishments, are the formidable, though destructible barriers.”

Although Bysshe eschewed the idea of entering Parliamentary life, he gave early proofs of his gifts of oratory. John Grove tells how his brother Charles went with Bysshe in the spring of 1811 to the British Forum in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. “It was then a spouting club, in which Gale Jones, and other Radicals abused all existing governments. Bysshe made so good a speech, complimenting and differing from the previous orators that, when he left the room, there was a rush to find out who he was, and to induce him to attend there again. He gave them a false name and address, not caring a farthing about the meeting, or the subjects there discussed.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shelley wrote *consequence*, but he probably meant to write *consonance*.

<sup>2</sup> Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 332.

## Shelley in England

Shelley, however, had some thoughts, even at that date, of becoming a reformer. One Sunday he went with Medwin to the Surrey Chapel to hear Rowland Hill, and he afterwards wrote, under an assumed name, to that popular preacher offering to address his congregation, but he received no reply to his letter.

When Hogg departed from London he went to Ellesmere in Shropshire to spend a few days with a fellow-collegian before settling down to his legal studies at York. After his separation from his solitary friend in Poland Street, letters began to pass from one to another, and it is possible to give some account of Bysshe's movements from his part of the correspondence.

Bysshe wrote on April 24 that he had called that morning on John Grove: "I met my father in the passage, and politely inquired after his health. He looked as black as a thundercloud, and said, 'Your most humble servant!' I made him a low bow, and, wishing him a very good morning, passed on. He is very irate about my proposals. I cannot resign anything, therefore, till I am twenty-one. I cannot do anything, therefore I have three more years to consider of the matter you mentioned."

Bysshe's uncle, Captain John Pilfold, a retired naval officer, was living at Cuckfield, some ten miles

## Harriet Westbrook

from Field Place, with his wife and children. Captain Pilfold, who had fought with Nelson in the Battle of the Nile, and had commanded a frigate at Trafalgar, seems to have been a good-hearted man with a liking for his nephew, who reciprocated this feeling. Bysshe had received "a very civil letter" from his uncle, whose arrival he awaited in order that he might return with him to Sussex. He said: "I shall go down to Field Place soon." . . . His father ("the old fellow," he calls him) was resolved, however, that Bysshe should not stay at Field Place, "but," said his rebellious son, "if I please—as I shall do for some time—I *will*. This resolution of mine was hinted to him: 'Oh! then I shall take his sister away before he comes.' " Bysshe said that he should follow her, as her retirement could not be kept a secret, and this would probably result in him wandering about for some time. He soon realised, however, that his favourite sister, Elizabeth, could no longer be counted upon as one of the faithful.

"My sister does not come to town, nor will she ever, at least I can see no chance of it," he wrote to Hogg.<sup>1</sup> "I will not deceive myself: she is lost, lost to everything; intolerance has tainted her—she talks cant and twaddle. I would not venture thus to prophesy without being most perfectly convinced in my own

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, April 28, 1811.

## Shelley in England

mind of the truth of what I say. It *may* not be irretrievable; but, yes, it is! A young female, who only once, only for a short time, asserted her claim to a unfettered use of reason, bred up with bigots, having before her eyes examples of the consequences of scepticism, or even of philosophy, which she must now see to lead directly to the former. A mother who is mild and tolerant, yet narrow-minded; how, I ask, is she to be rescued from its influence? ”

Mr. Shelley was still unappeased—“Father is as fierce as a lion again”—but the question had been broached to him of making a small provision for Bysshe. John Grove had seen him, and had “succeeded in flattering him into a promise” that he would allow his son £200 a year and leave him alone. Mr. Shelley, however, went home<sup>1</sup> and wrote to withdraw his promise of the income, though Bysshe conjectured that Grove (whom he calls *Gelidum Nemus*), like a flattering courtier, would bring him about again. Mr. Shelley now wanted Bysshe to go to Oxford to apologise to the master, but this suggestion met with a stout refusal.

It was not without a sense of humour that Bysshe wrote to Hogg (May 8): “The estate is *entirely* entailed on me—totally out of the power of the enemy.

<sup>1</sup> In an unpublished note, April 25, 1811, Mr. T. Shelley wrote to Whitton, “I return home on Saturday (that is April 28), leaving the young man to his own imagination.”

## Harriet Westbrook

He is yet angry beyond measure—pacification is remote ; but I will be at peace, *vi et armis*. I will enter his dominions, preserving a Quaker-like carelessness of opposition. I shall manage à *l'Amérique* [sic], and seat myself quietly in his mansion, turning a deaf ear to any declamatory objections.”

In anticipation of obtaining a fixed allowance from his father, Bysshe told Hogg that he wished to meet him at York, that he might settle pecuniary matters with him. “I am quite well off in that [respect] now,” he said. “Remember it is idle to talk of money between us, and little as it may do for politics, with us, you must allow the possession of bullion, chattels, &c., is common. Tell me, then, if you want cash, as I have nearly drained you, and all delicacy, like sisters stripping before each other, is out of the question.” Bysshe’s ideas of a sufficient income were very moderate ; he never cared about money for himself ; he gave away to others with liberal hands practically all he ever had. “£200 per annum,” he wrote,<sup>1</sup> “is really enough—more than I can want—besides, what is money to me ? What does it matter if I cannot even purchase sufficient *genteel clothes* ? I still have a shabby greatcoat, and those whose good opinion constitutes my happiness would not regard me the better, or the worse, for this, or any other

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, May 12, 1811.

## Shelley in England

consequence of poverty. £50 per annum would be quite enough."

By the middle of May, when he was at Field Place, the income was arranged with the help of Captain Pilfold, "who settled matters admirably" for Bysshe. "I have come to terms with my father," he announced to Hogg on May 15, "*I call them very good ones. I am to possess £200 per annum. I shall live very well upon it. . . . I am also to do as I please with respect to the choice of abode. I need not mention what it will be.*"

Had Mr. Shelley arrived at a reasonable arrangement with his son directly after the expulsion, and carried him off to Field Place instead of leaving him at Poland Street while he pottered with his solicitor over the terms of reconciliation, it is possible that much of the trouble that was in store for them might have been avoided. His acquaintance with the Westbrooks might, for one thing, have been nipped in the bud. Although eighteen and a half is an age when many youths have to shift for themselves and do so quite effectively, it was an unfortunate, and indeed dangerous experiment in the case of Bysshe, with his singular lack of worldly wisdom and experience.

Charles H. Grove spent a part of the Christmas vacation of 1810 with the Shelleys at Field Place,

## Harriet Westbrook

and he returned to London in the following January. He recalled in after years going with Bysshe to Mr. Westbrook's house in Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square; the object of this visit being to deliver a letter of introduction and a present from Mary Shelley to her schoolfellow, Harriet Westbrook.<sup>1</sup> This, apparently, was Bysshe's first meeting with Harriet, whom, Miss Hellen Shelley said, she well remembered as a very handsome girl, with a complexion quite unknown in those days—"brilliant pink and white, and hair quite like a poet's dream, and Bysshe's peculiar admiration." Harriet Westbrook was at Miss Fenning's school on Clapham Common, where Bysshe's sisters, Mary and Hellen, were also boarders. Both the schoolmistress and teachers used to remark upon Harriet's good looks. They evidently regarded her as the beauty of the school without rival, and on one occasion, when they were discussing together a possible *fête champêtre*, they singled her out for the rôle of Venus.

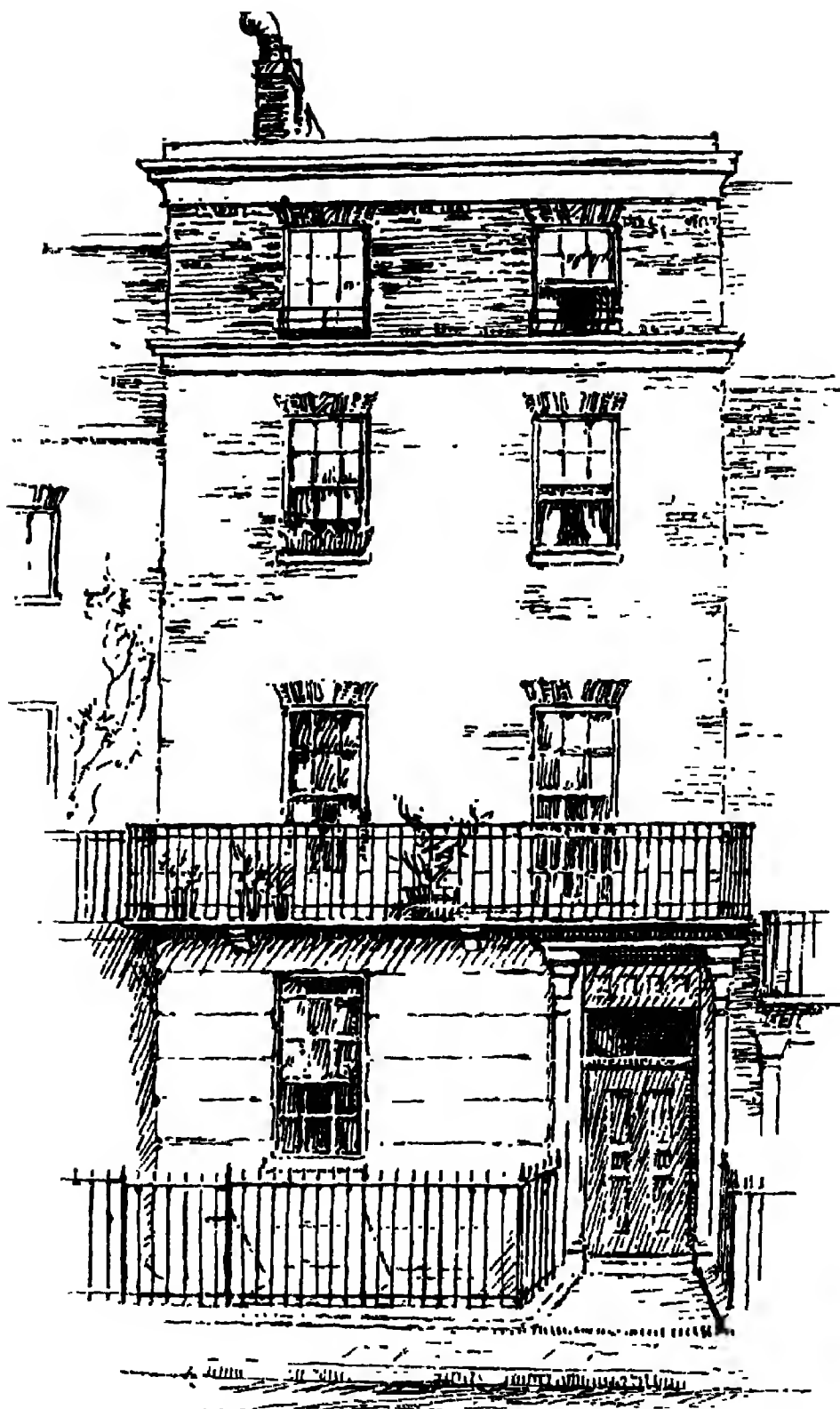
Such was her appearance as a young girl. Peacock, who knew her later, and was to the last her valiant advocate, tells us that she possessed a good figure, and was light, active, and graceful. Her features

<sup>1</sup> The Register of Baptisms in the parish of St. George, Hanover Square, states that Harriet, daughter of John and Ann Westbrook, was born on August 1, 1795, and baptized on August 27 of the same year; consequent  $\vee$  in January 1811 her age was nearly sixteen and a half.

## Shelley in England

were regular and well-proportioned, her hair light brown, and she "dressed with taste and simplicity." In her dress she was *simplex munditiis*. Her complexion was beautifully transparent, the tint of the blush-rose shining through the lily. The tone of her voice was pleasant; her speech the essence of frankness and cordiality; her spirits always cheerful; her laugh spontaneous, hearty, and joyous." Her beauty easily won Bysshe's admiration; his sister Hellen suggests that he was attracted to her because she bore the name of Harriet, that of his earlier love, Miss Grove. That she was the daughter of John Westbrook, who had retired on a fortune made in keeping the Mount Coffee House<sup>1</sup>—probably also a club—was no obstacle in Bysshe's eyes. It did not seem to enter into his calculation in cultivating the friendship of the lovely daughter of "Jew" Westbrook, as he was called, some say, on account of his swarthy complexion, but more probably because he may have added money-lending to his regular business. On January 11, 1811, shortly after Bysshe's introductory visit to the Westbrooks' house, he requested his publisher to send Harriet a copy of his recently published novel, *St. Irvyne*. In writing these instructions he erred in the number of her house, which was then evidently unfamiliar to him.

<sup>1</sup> At 78 Lower Grosvenor Street, Grosvenor Square.



**23 CHAPEL STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE**

**THE RESIDENCE OF JOHN WESTBROOK, SHELLEY'S FATHER-IN-LAW.  
THE THOROUGHFARE HAS BEEN REBUILT IN RECENT YEARS,  
AND RENAMED ALDFORD STREET.**



## Harriet Westbrook

From that time both Bysshe and Harriet corresponded with one another. After his expulsion from Oxford, while he was living in Poland Street, he was a frequent visitor at Chapel Street. Cut off from all intercourse with his family, he probably found the society of Harriet and her sister very pleasant, while they were obviously flattered by his attentions. Eliza, the elder Miss Westbrook, was ten or eleven years her sister's senior, had none of her good looks, but resembled her father in possessing dark eyes and a quantity of coarse black hair. Harriet's beauty no doubt attracted more attention than was pleasant to Eliza who, while "mothering" her, may have prompted Mr. Westbrook to keep her at school.

Bysshe told Hogg on April 18 that Miss Westbrook had at that moment called on him with her sister; "it certainly was very kind of her." When at length the younger girl was sent back to school Bysshe wrote:<sup>1</sup> "My little friend, Harriet W., is gone to her prison-house. She is quite well in health; at least so she says, though she looks very much otherwise. I saw her yesterday. I went with her [? and her sister] to Miss H.<sup>2</sup> and walked about Clapham Common with them for two hours. The youngest is a most amiable girl; the eldest is really

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, April 24, 1811.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Hawkes, who succeeded Miss Fenning as headmistress to the school.

## Shelley in England

conceited, but very condescending. I took the Sacrament with her on Sunday."

That Harriet seemed to be setting her cap at Bysshe, Hogg evidently feared, and he accused his friend, perhaps ironically, of talking "philosophically of her kindness" in calling on him. Bysshe, however, thought that she was "very charitable and good," as in paying these visits to a solitary young man, ostracised from his family on account of religious differences, she exposed herself to much possible odium. Bysshe admitted that "to point out to her a road which leads to perfection" would perhaps be scarcely doing her a kindness, and it might induce positive unhappiness, and "not repay the difficulties of the progress." Then he adds, as if on reflection: "If trains of thought, development of mental energies, influence in any degree a future state; if this is *even* possible—if it stands on *at all* securer ground than mere hypothesis; then is it not a service?" Bysshe concluded this letter with the announcement that he was going to Miss Westbrook's to dinner. "Her father is out."

A day or two after Bysshe wrote<sup>1</sup> from the Groves' house at Lincoln's Inn Fields, again with regard to Harriet. At last he seemed to have a vague suspicion that all was not right, that Eliza was playing the part

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, April 28, 1811.

## Harriet Westbrook

of match-maker, and doing her best to secure him for her sister. Women generally discovered pretty soon that Bysshe's heart was his most vulnerable point. "I don't know where I am, where I will be. Future, present, past, is all a mist; it seems as if I had begun existence anew, under auspices so unfavourable. Yet no! That is stupid! My poor little friend has been ill, her sister sent for me the other night. I found her on a couch, pale; her father is civil to me, very strangely; the sister is too civil by half. She began talking about *l'Amour*. I philosophised, and the youngest said she had such a headache that she could not bear conversation. Her sister then went away, and I stayed till half-past twelve. Her father had a large party below. He invited me; I refused. Yes! The fiend,<sup>1</sup> the wretch shall fall! Harriet will do for one of the crushers, and the eldest (Emily),<sup>2</sup> with some taming, will do too. They are both very clever, and the youngest (my friend) is amiable. Yesterday she was better; to-day her father compelled her to go to Clapham, whither I have conducted her, and I am now returned."

Harriet Westbrook, who was much older than the rest of the pupils, disliked returning to school, and Bysshe was only too ready to conclude that she was

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Rossetti suggested that Shelley is here referring to Intolerance.

<sup>2</sup> She was generally known as "Eliza"; this may be a slip of the pen or she may have possessed both names.

## Shelley in England

a martyr to her father's tyranny. She may have boasted of her acquaintance with Bysshe, who had not only taken her to the school but had paid her attentions when he visited his sisters there, and had walked with her and Eliza Westbrook on Clapham Common. He told Hogg<sup>1</sup> that Harriet's school-fellows would not speak to her, or even reply to her questions. They called her "an abandoned wretch," and she was "universally hated"; she returned this treatment, however, "with the calmest contempt." But Harriet had a champion in little Hellen, Bysshe's third sister, who, "in spite of the *infamy*," was not afraid to speak to her, because she could not see what she had done to incur the dislike of the other pupils. "There are some hopes of this dear little girl," said Bysshe slyly, with reference to Harriet Westbrook. "She would be a divine little scion of infidelity if I could get hold of her. I think my lessons have taken effect."

As a matter of fact, it was with horror that Harriet had learnt that Bysshe was an atheist, for such he was described at the school. She did not at first understand the meaning of the word, but when it was explained to her, she was "truly petrified." She could not conceive how it was possible that he could for one moment continue to live after professing such

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, (?) May 1, 1811.

## Harriet Westbrook

principles, and she solemnly declared that he should never change hers. When she wrote to Bysshe, Harriet endeavoured to shake his opinions, but she declined to listen to any of his arguments.<sup>1</sup>

Bysshe found the solitude of Poland Street unbearable, notwithstanding his habit of philosophising. He was rather young to derive much solace from philosophy, and confessed that he could not endure "the horror, the evil which comes to *self* in solitude." He wanted to go home, and said, "I long for the moment to see my sisters." So he spent most of his time at Miss Westbrook's, whose character he thought he had been too hasty in criticising. He now thought her "amiable" because he wished to be charitable, though not perhaps "amiable" in the same degree as her pretty sister. One day he wrote<sup>2</sup> to Hogg from the Westbrook's house in Chapel Street, and while Eliza, no doubt desiring to please him, was reading an odd book for a young woman of those days—none other than Voltaire's *Dictionnaire Philosophique*—Bysshe filled his letter, as usual, with many of the topics that interested him.

Hogg apparently had been discussing in a former letter the prospects of his future income, and something that he had written caused Bysshe to accuse

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Miss Hitchener (March 14, 1812) Harriet gives this account of her early acquaintance with Shelley.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley to Hogg, (?) May 12, 1811.

## Shelley in England

him of wishing to be a "grandee." Bysshe computed that "when heaven takes your father," as his eldest son Hogg would probably have some three thousand pounds a year of property, perhaps convertible from three into five per cent. Bysshe confessed that were he in such a position it would puzzle him how to act with such a store, although he himself would not consent to own even half that sum. He believed, however, that he could see why Hogg would not relinquish his inheritance: "You think it would possibly add to the happiness of some being to whom you cherish a remote hope of some approximative union—the indissoluble, sacred union of Love." He was probably thinking of Elizabeth and of his own case when he wrote these words. That he was ready to fall in love seems to be shown in some lines in a poem that he enclosed in this letter to Hogg, with the excuse that his effusion was the result of a "strange momentary mania":

"And oh! when on the blest reviving  
The day-star dawns of love,  
Each energy of soul surviving  
More vivid, soars above.  
Hast thou ne'er felt the rapturous thrill,  
Like June's warm breath, athwart thee fly,  
O'er each idea then to steal  
When other passions die?"

It was love, not matrimony, for which he yearned.  
But Hogg was for supporting the marriage bond, and

## Harriet Westbrook

Bysshe replied with the following ominous remarks, as if prompted by Miss Westbrook's presence. "Marriage," he said, quoting Godwin, "is hateful, detestable. A kind of ineffable, sickening disgust seizes my mind when I think of this most despotic, most unrequired fetter which prejudice has forged to confine its energies. Yes! this is a superstition, and superstition must perish before this can fall! For men never speak of the author of religion as of what he really was, but as being what the world would have made him. Anti-matrimonialism is as necessarily connected with scepticism as if religion and marriage began their course together. How can we think well of the world? Surely these moralists suppose young men are like young puppies (as, perhaps, *generaliter* they are), not endowed with vision until a certain age."

Still dwelling on this subject, in another letter<sup>1</sup> to Hogg, who had been writing in support of matrimony, he wrote: "I could not endure the bare idea of marriage, even if I had no arguments in favour of my dislike; but I think I have," and then, after discussing the matter as he said, *à la Faber*, he concluded: "For God's sake, if you want more argument, read the marriage service before you *think* of allowing an amiable, beloved female to submit to such degradation."

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, (?) May 13, 1811.

## Shelley in England

This letter was written from his uncle's place at Cuckfield, and on the eve of his departure for Field Place. "Misses Westbrook are now very well. I have arranged a correspondence with them, when I will impart more of the character of the eldest."

One at least of Eliza Westbrook's letters to Bysshe has been preserved. The following, although unsigned, is sealed with the initial "E," and had fallen into Mr. Shelley's hands, who attested it with his endorsement, "Miss Westbrook." One cannot say exactly what was the nature of Bysshe's "proposition," but it was evidently with regard to removing Harriet from school. Is it possible that he thought of obtaining an invitation for her to visit either Field Place or his uncle's house at Cuckfield? Eliza's request, however, that Bysshe should not talk about his intimacy with the Westbrooks would have revealed her designs to anyone but the most unsophisticated.

### *Eliza Westbrook to P. B. Shelley*

LONDON, *May*,  
[*Postmark, June 11, 1811*].

MY DEAR MR. SHELLEY,—It gives me pleasure to see from the trend of your last letter that your mind has greatly recovered its accustomed cheerfulness, and that you are otherwise amended by a change of residence.

I am obliged to you for your proposition in regard

## Harriet Westbrook

to Harriett, but I am in hopes she will leave school for good—there has been another little misunderstanding between the friends at Clapham, which has rendered the situation of my sister so completely uncomfortable my Father has now determined upon her not returning there again; he talks of wholly retiring into the country, but not to any distant part. It is so much my wish to leave this busy scene that I shall do all in my power to expedite his plan.

You will not take any notice to your sister Mary, or indeed any of your family, of your intimacy with us; for particular reasons which I will explain to you when next I have the pleasure of seeing you.—Adieu, ever yours obliged.

[Addressed]

P. B. SHELLEY, Esq.,

Capt. Pilfold's, R.N.

Cuckfield, Sussex.

Hogg realised that the scent of danger was stronger than ever, owing to his friend's unrestricted correspondence with Harriet and her sister, and he again uttered a word of warning. "I cannot so deeply see," said Bysshe, who was disinclined to take the hint, "into the inferences of actions, as to come to the odd conclusion, which you observed in the matter of Miss Westbrook."<sup>1</sup> The elder sister improved upon Bysshe's acquaintance, an acquaintance developed in the course of his correspondence with her. But he was not sure whether she appeared to advantage

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, May 19, 1811.

## Shelley in England

merely by comparison “with surrounding indifference and degradation.”

He was, however, no very sure judge of character, and the opinions he formed of his acquaintances too frequently were self-delusory, resulting from the interchange of letters. He admitted Hogg’s superiority, as a man of the world, in his estimates of people. Bysshe’s unsophisticated little friend Harriet was still kept at school, or “prison,” as he calls it. “There is something in *her* more noble, yet not so cultivated as the elder—a larger diamond, yet not so highly polished. Her indifference to, her contempt of surrounding prejudice, are certainly fine. But perhaps the other wants opportunity. I confess that I cannot mark female excellence, or its degrees, by a print of the foot, a waving of vesture, &c., as in your case; but perhaps this criterion only holds good when an *angel*, not a mortal, is in the case.”

By May 15 Bysshe was once more under the paternal roof, and for a time able to be with his mother and sister. On his arrival at Field Place he learnt that Elizabeth had been ill with scarlet fever, but she was now getting better, though hardly yet able to speak. Bysshe reproached himself for having misjudged her; and it was with “some emotions of pleasure mingled with those of pain” when he learnt that illness had prevented her from writing to him. Mr. Shelley had

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forbidden Bysshe to have any conversation with her, but Captain Pilfold had talked him over, and so brother and sister were able to see one another, with restrictions. A part of his time was spent in reading to Elizabeth, but he realised that he no longer had her full confidence. In talking to his mother, whom he found "quite rational," she confessed to no belief either in prayer or thanksgiving, and was of the opinion that a good man, whether philosopher or Christian, "will do very well in whatever future state awaits us." Indeed, he now believed that the mass of mankind were Christians only in name, and that there was no reality in their religion. "Certain members of my family," he said, "are no more Christians than Epicurus himself was." Even Mr. Shelley himself, the advocate of Paley, while with Captain Pilfold, had unburdened himself so far as to say, "To tell you the truth, *I* am a sceptic!" 'Ah! eh!' thought the captain, 'old birds are not to be caught with chaff.' 'Are you, indeed?'" was the cold reply, and no more was got out of him.

Captain Pilfold, who had taken up Bysshe's cause, made him welcome at his house, to which he was glad to return after spending a few days in the gloomy atmosphere of Field Place. "I am now with my uncle," he wrote to Hogg,<sup>1</sup> "he is a very hearty

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, May 19, 1811; *ib.*, May 26.

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fellow, and has behaved very nobly to me, in return for which I have illuminated him. A physician, named Dr. J——, dined with us last night, who is a red-hot saint ; the Captain attacked him, warm from *The Necessity*, and the Doctor went away very much shocked.” Still writing from Cuckfield, some days later, he said, “I take the opportunity of the Old Boy’s absence in London to persuade my mother and Elizabeth, who is now quite well, to come to Cuckfield, because there they will be three, or more, days absent from this Killjoy, as I name him.”

During his visit to Cuckfield, Bysshe made the acquaintance of Miss Elizabeth Hitchener, who kept a school at Hurstpierpoint, and numbered among her pupils two of the Captain’s daughters. She was some ten years older than Bysshe, but her views were liberal, and she was quite ready to discuss with him his favourite subjects of religious philosophy and philanthropy. He was at this time exactly in the mood for such an acquaintance to whom he could pour out his soul in long, unrestrained and frequent letters written in his bold flowing hand. Bysshe was charmed with his new friend, whom he soon invested with all the virtues and attributes he most admired, and it was with characteristic enthusiasm that he enlisted her among his correspondents. Miss Hitchener was a worthy woman who had endeavoured to make

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the best of her opportunities and, as the daughter of humble parents, they were few. Her father, it is said, was formerly a smuggler, a not uncommon occupation in Sussex in his day, but it had its dangers as well as its compensations, and he had abandoned it for the trade of innkeeper, changing his name at the same time from Yorke to that of Hitchener. Shelley began to write to Miss Hitchener shortly after he returned to London, and her letters soon became scarcely less ardent than his.

While at Oxford, Mr. Strong, an acquaintance of Shelley, had shown him the manuscript of some verses by a Miss Janetta Philipps. Shelley much admired the verses, and offered to print them at his own expense, as he stated that in doing so it would "make even some balances" with his printer. Mr. Strong promised to deliver the manuscript for that purpose to Shelley, who, fearing his "intention might shock the delicacy of a noble female mind," was resolved that his assistance should not be made known to the authoress. After Shelley's expulsion Mr. Strong declined to have anything further to do with him. Shelley, however, was still interested in the fate of her poems, and, nothing daunted, addressed a letter to Miss Philipps from Field Place, on May 16, 1811, "wholly unacquainted, unintroduced, except through the medium of" her "exquisite poetry." He ex-

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plained the circumstances which had prompted him to write to her, and still solicited "the honour" of being allowed to bear the expenses of printing the book.

The poems were subsequently issued in 1811 at Oxford by Collingwood & Co., to subscribers, of whom there is a list in the volume occupying ten pages, and among them are the names of Mr. P. B. Shelley (six copies); Miss Shelley, Field Place; Miss Hellen Shelley; Mrs. Grove, Lincoln's Inn Fields (three copies); Miss H. Westbrook; Thomas Medwin, Esq., Horsham; Mr. Munday, Bookseller, Oxford; Mr. Graham, 29 Vine Street, Piccadilly; and Mr. Philipps (six copies). The last named, who subscribed for the same number of copies as Shelley, was probably a relative of the author, no one else taking as many copies. Miss Philipps seems to have declined Shelley's offer; but the evidence is there that he was active in obtaining subscribers for the volume. The sale of the 525 copies of the book, for which the list of subscribers accounts, would probably have been sufficient to defray the printer's bill. Miss Philipps' relatives and acquaintances, it is stated, were mostly resident in Bridgwater and its neighbourhood, and she does not appear to have been connected with Phillips, the Worthing printer, whose name is spelt differently.

There is little in the poems to justify Shelley's high opinion, but the little volume is interesting as a proof

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of his generosity to a fellow-poet. He concluded his letter to Miss Philipps by saying that, in the pamphlet which caused his expulsion from Oxford, he had questioned the existence of a Deity. "In justice to myself," he added, "I must also declare that a proof of *his* existence, or even the divine mission of Christ, would in no matter alter one idea on the subject of morality." Miss Philipps replied, and in acknowledging her letter he admitted that it had caused him extreme surprise. One gathers that she declined his offer, and expressed disapproval of his principles, but there is nothing to show whether his request that she would write again was ever granted.

Shelley found that time dragged along wearily enough at Field Place. "I have nothing to tell you which you will like to hear," he wrote to Hogg on June 2nd. "The affected contempt of narrowed intellects for the exertion of mental powers, which they either will not or cannot comprehend, is always a tale of disgust. What must it be when involving a keen disappointment? I have hesitated for three days on what I should do, what I should say. I am your friend, you acknowledge it. You have chosen me, and we are inseparable; not the tyranny of idiots can affect it; not the misrepresentations of the interested."

Hogg, however, was no longer available for personal companionship, and the confidence of his sister Eliza-

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beth, as he said, "even is diminished, that confidence once so unbounded: but it is to be regained." He had written a long letter from Cuckfield, probably one of his appeals that she should "assert her claim to an unfettered use of reason," but her answer was unsympathetic. His letters to Hogg filled a part of his time.

Bysshe had suffered a great disappointment when his father cancelled Hogg's promised visit to Field Place. It was the wish of his heart that his friend should fall in love with his sister Elizabeth, and he had done as much as was possible to further his object by talking about one to the other. Sometimes Bysshe had shown Hogg's letters to Elizabeth, or delivered his messages to her. Since Bysshe's return to Field Place he had found her so changed and unsympathetic that apparently she gave him no encouragement to discuss his friend. But Bysshe, still cherishing the idea of making the match, devised the following plan. Hogg was to be secretly admitted to Field Place: no one except Bysshe was to know of his presence in the house, and he was to occupy a room from the window of which he was to see Elizabeth in the garden and to fall in love with her. The arrangements for this scheme must be given in Bysshe's words: <sup>1</sup> "Come then, my dear friend:

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, June 23, 1811.

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happy, *most* happy shall I be if you will share my little study ; happy that you come on an errand so likely to soothe me, and restore my peace. There are two rooms in this house which I have taken exclusively to myself ; my sister *will* not enter them, and no one else *shall* ; these you shall inhabit with me. You must content yourself to sleep upon a mattress ; and you will be like a State prisoner. You must only walk with me at midnight for fear of discovery. My window commands a view of the lawn, where you will frequently see an object that will amply repay your journey—the object of my fond affections. Time and opportunity must effect that in my <sup>1</sup> favour with him which entreaties cannot. Indeed I do not think it advisable to say too much on the subject ; but more when we meet. Do not trouble yourself with any baggage ; I have plenty of clean things for you. The mail will convey you from York to London, whence the Horsham coach will bring you to Horsham ; (news !) there I will meet you at midnight, whence you shall be conveyed to your apartment. Come then, I entreat you ; I will return with you to York. *I almost insist on your coming*—I shall fully expect you.”

In answer to this mad plan Hogg, not unnaturally,

<sup>1</sup> Shelley may have written “that in your favour with her,” and that this is one of Hogg’s altered or careless transcripts. The original is not available for comparison.

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accused Bysshe of being unreasonable. Bysshe replied,<sup>1</sup> "I was mad! You know that very little sets my horrid spirits in motion. I drank a glass or two of wine at my mother's instigation, then began raving. She, to quiet me, gave me pens, ink, and paper, and I wrote to you. Elizabeth is, indeed, an unworthy companion of the Muses. I do not rest much on her poetry now. Miss Philipps betrayed twice the genius: greater amiability, if to affect the feeling is a proof of the latter."

Bysshe did not, however, abandon his project that his sister Elizabeth should make a match with Hogg; and he also looked forward to the time when he could join his friend. In writing somewhat later (from Cwm Elan towards the end of July) Bysshe said, "I did *execrate* my existence once, when I first discovered that there was no chance of our being united. To enjoy your society and that of my sister has now for some months been my aim. She is not what she was: you continue the same, and may you ever be so." Bysshe, who had at one time so much admired Elizabeth's verses, was disappointed, and he now thought that Miss F. D. Browne<sup>2</sup> ("certainly a tigress") surpassed his sister "in poetical talents."

<sup>1</sup> Hogg to Shelley, (?) June 27, 1811.

<sup>2</sup> Felicia Dorothea Browne, afterwards Mrs. Hemans (1796-1835), whose "Poems" were printed in 1808, when the youthful authoress was twelve years old.

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A fortnight later he wrote <sup>1</sup> from London to tell Hogg that he had a rival in his sister's affections, in the person of John Grove, whose chances of success, he thought, were equal to Hogg's. It was difficult to see how this could be the case when 'Grove had the opportunity of frequently seeing and conversing with Miss Shelley, whereas Hogg had never seen her. But, according to Bysshe, Grove was not a favoured lover, nor ever could be. She feared she would "lose an entertaining acquaintance who sometimes enlivened her solitude by his conversation, by his conversion into the more serious character of a lover." She seems to have rejected the advances of John Grove, whose attachment was "that of a cool, unimpassioned selector of a companion for life." Bysshe, however, was not able to give Hogg much hope, as he had no reason to suppose that her rejection "proceeded from any augmented leniency for another."

Nor did Bysshe find his mother very companionable. "I am a perfect hermit : not a being to speak with ! I sometimes exchange a word with my mother on the subject of the weather, upon which she is irresistibly

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, from London, Aug. 15, 1811. This letter, like many others printed by Hogg in his *Life of Shelley*, contains some passages which are not easy of explanation. The late Lady Shelley, however, had an opportunity of correcting this and some other letters of Shelley with the originals, and her copy (in Lord Abinger's hands) was printed by M. Koszul in *La Jeunesse de Shelley*, and in the Appendix to the new edition of *Shelley's Letters*, 1912 and 1915.

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eloquent ; otherwise all is deep silence ! I wander about this place, walking all over the grounds, with no particular object in view." He was too unsettled in mind to do any writing except now and then a letter to Hogg or the Miss Westbrooks, and he confessed himself "tired and ennuied." He found little to read except Miss Owenson's *Missionary*, which he described as "a divine thing ; Luxima, the Indian, is an angel. What a pity that we cannot incorporate these creations of fancy ; the very thoughts of them thrill the soul !" Another book that had excited Shelley's interest at this time was Southey's *Curse of Kehama*, which he described to his newly-made friend, Miss Elizabeth Hitchener, as his "most favourite poem." He was already a reader of the poetry of Scott and Campbell, for neither of which he seems to have cared. Southey's poetry was his first experience of the new influence in letters, and it remained Shelley's ideal until he later became acquainted with, and learnt to appreciate, the work of his two great contemporaries, Wordsworth and Coleridge.

Hogg asserted that a newspaper never found its place into Shelley's rooms at Oxford, but he did not disdain them at Field Place. His fancy was diverted by reading about the Prince Regent's *fête* at Carlton House on June 19, 1811, described by a journalist of the day as on a "scale of unprecedented

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magnificence." The *Morning Chronicle*, which came out with a long account of the banquet, contains the following passages: "His Royal Highness the Prince Regent entered the State apartments about a quarter past nine o'clock, dressed in a scarlet coat, most richly and elegantly ornamented in a very novel style with gold lace, with a brilliant star of the Order of the Garter. . . . The conservatory presented the fine effect of a lofty aisle in an ancient cathedral. . . . The grand table extended the whole length of the conservatory and across Carlton House to the length of 200 feet. . . . Along the centre of the table, about six inches above the surface, a canal of pure water continued flowing from a silver fountain, beautifully constructed, at the head of the table. Its faintly waving, artificial banks were covered with green moss and aquatic flowers; gold and silver fish, gudgeons, &c., were seen to swim and sport through the bubbling current, which produced a pleasing murmur when it fell, and formed a cascade at the outlet. At the head of the table above the fountain sat his Royal Highness the Prince Regent on a throne of crimson velvet trimmed with gold. The throne commanded a view of the company, consisting of, among other distinguished guests, the Bourbon Princes." "What think you," wrote Shelley <sup>1</sup> on June 20, "of the bubbling *brooks* and

<sup>1</sup> To Elizabeth Hitchener.

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mossy banks at Carlton House—the *allées vertes*, &c. ? It is said that this entertainment will cost £120,000. Nor will it be the last bauble which the nation must buy to amuse this overgrown bantling of Regency. How admirably this growing spirit of ludicrous magnificence tallies with the disgusting splendours of the stage of the Roman Empire which preceded its destruction. Yet here are a people advanced in intellectual improvement wilfully rushing to a revolution, the natural death of all commercial empires, which must plunge them in the barbarisms from which they are slowly rising.”

But the ludicrous side of the banquet also appealed to Shelley, who wrote to Edward Fergus Graham, above the signature of Philobasileus, a burlesque letter, calling upon him to join in a “loyal endeavour to magnify, if magnification be possible, our Noble Royal Family. . . . In fine, Græme, thou hast an harp of fire and I a pen of honey. Let, then, the song roll—wide let it roll.—Take thou thy tuning-fork—for the ode is coming—lo ! Fargy, thou art as the bard of old, I as the poet of the other times. When kings murdered men ; then was the lay of praise poured upon their ears--when adulation fled afar, and truth, white-robed seraph, descended to whisper into royal ears. . . . They were not so rude as to say, ‘Thou Tyrant.’ No ! Nor will I . . . see if I do.”

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On the back of the sheet he wrote out this stanza of his version of the "Marseillaise" :

"Tremble, Kings, despised of man !  
Ye traitors to your Country,  
Tremble ! Your parricidal plan  
At length shall meet its destiny . . .

We are all soldiers fit to fight,  
But if we sink in glory's night,  
Our mother EARTH will give ye new  
The brilliant pathway to pursue  
Which leads to DEATH or VICTORY." <sup>1</sup>

Charles Grove mentions the Regent's *fête* at Carlton House as being much commented on in the papers ; it was disapproved of and laughed at by the Opposition, of which Bysshe was one. He also states that Bysshe "wrote a poem on the subject of about fifty lines, which he published immediately, wherein he apostrophised the Prince as sitting on the bank of his tiny river ; and he amused himself with throwing copies into the carriages of persons going to Carlton House after the *fête*." No copy of this satire has as yet been discovered ; but Grove recalled the following fragment :

"By the mossy brink  
With me the Prince shall sit and think ;  
Shall muse in visioned Regency,  
Rapt in bright dreams of dawning Royalty."

<sup>1</sup> This letter was first printed by M. H. Buxton Forman in *The Shelley Library*, p. 24. The MS. of Shelley's complete translation of the "Marseillaise" is in the possession of his grandson, Mr. Charles Esdaile, who allowed M. A. Koszul to print it in his work *La Jeunesse de Shelley*, where it appears in the appendix.

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While Bysshe was in London he had renewed acquaintance with his cousin, Thomas Grove, and his wife, who were on a visit to Lincoln's Inn Fields. Thomas Grove, the eldest son of the family, lived at Cwm Elan, a fine estate, comprising many thousands of acres, in the heart of Wales, within a few miles of Rhayader in Radnorshire. Bysshe was anxious to see the place after having heard Harriet Grove extol its beauties, and when Grove sent him an invitation early in July to visit Cwm Elan he gladly accepted it. Mr. Shelley also welcomed the idea of getting his son away, as he thought the change of scene might have a happy result. Mr. Whitton, who heard of the proposed visit, wrote to Mr. Shelley on July 10 in a hopeful frame of mind :

“ I trust with you that different scenes and habits will create different feelings in your son. He is very young, and time will, I cannot doubt, bring different reflections to his mind and beget different opinions. The course you have taken is, I think, the one best calculated to promote that end and his ultimate good. You have placed him in a situation that necessarily calls forth thought for himself, and his apparent independence is more likely to affect his mind than any restraint under which you could have placed him. Besides the general ridicule which the world would give to his doctrines will correct better than restraint.

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I trust and hope that you and Mrs. Shelley will yet find comfort instead of pain in the progress of your son in life."

Bysshe was at Cwm Elan by July 15,<sup>1</sup> and, in an undated note to Hogg, he wrote to announce his arrival at that place. It had been his intention to take York on his way in order to see his friend. He had written previously asking Hogg to procure lodgings for him in that city, but his plan was discovered by Mr. Shelley, who promptly made its execution impossible. "I had a letter from my father; all is found out about my inviting you to Horsham, and my proposed journey to York, which is thereby for a while prevented. God send he does not write to your father; it would annoy him. I threw cold water on the rage of the old buck. I question whether he has let the family into the secret of his discovery, which must have been *magically* effected."

Bysshe was anxious to enlist his mother's sympathy in Hogg, whose letters he passed on to her. "She feels a warm interest in you," Bysshe wrote to him, "as every woman must, and I am well assured that she will do nothing prejudicial to our interests. She is a good, worthy woman; and although she may in some cases resemble the fish and pheasant ladies,

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's first letter to Miss Hitchener from Cwm Elan bears the postmark date of July 15.

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honoured with your animadversions of this morning, yet there is one altitude which they have attained, to which, I think, she cannot soar—Intolerance. I have heard frequently from her since my arrival here ; she is of opinion that my father could not, by ordinary means, have become acquainted with the proposed visit. I regard the whole as a finesse, to which I had supposed the Honourable Member's headpiece unequal. But the servants may— No, they do not even know your name.”<sup>1</sup>

In accepting his cousin's invitation to Cwm Elan, Bysshe had intended also visiting the Westbrooks, who were staying at Aberystwith. He then changed his mind in order to go to York. He had made no secret of his intended visit to Hogg in writing to his father from London, perhaps when he was on his way to Wales ; Mr. Shelley, however, replied that he might go, but he should have no money from him if he did. “The case, therefore,” said Bysshe, “became one of extreme necessity ; I was forced to submit, and I am now here. Do not think, however, but that I shall come to see you long before you come to reside in London ; but open warfare will never do, and Mr. Peyton will easily swallow up Mr. Shelley. I shall keep quiet here for a few weeks.” He had no alternative but to remain at Cwm Elan, as he did not possess

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Hogg, from Rhayader, (?) August 1, 1811.

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the money to pay his fare to York. "I am what the sailors call banyaning. I do not see a soul; all is gloomy and desolate." He seemed to derive little amusement from his chief occupations of climbing rocks, exploring the scenery, and reading the poetry of Erasmus Darwin. But he did luxuriate in the scenery, and was more astonished at its grandeur than he had expected; although he was conscious that other things prevented him from admiring it as it deserved. He found all else stale and unprofitable: "indeed, this place is a great bore."

But, nevertheless, he tried to convey to Miss Hitchener some idea of the natural beauties of the place. "Nature is here marked with the most impressive characters of loveliness and grandeur, once I was tremulously alive to tones and scenes; the habit of analysing feelings, I fear, does not agree with this. It is spontaneous, and, when it becomes subject to consideration, ceases to exist. . . . This valley is covered with trees, so are partly the mountains that surround it. Rocks, piled on each other to an immense height, and clouds intersecting them—in other places, waterfalls 'midst the umbrage of a thousand shadowy trees, form the principal features of the scenery. I am not wholly uninfluenced by its magic in my lonely walks, but I long for a thunderstorm."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> July 29, 1811.

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His hosts tried to make Bysshe happy ; we read of him acting as Mrs. Grove's cavalier in a ride with her to Rhayader. He spoke of having been to church, where he listened to a sermon in Welsh, and was present at a christening, which " was performed out of an old broken slop-basin." He found some consolation in writing and receiving letters, though he lamented the loss of certain epistles from Hogg, which had gone astray owing to the pillage of the mail.

Bysshe had heard from the Westbrooks, and towards the last week in July he still contemplated visiting them at Aberystwith. But his frequent references to them in his correspondence had caused Hogg to employ some banter at Harriet's expense. Bysshe, however, was apparently not very well pleased with his friend's humour, and remarked, somewhat stiffly, probably on the last day of July, " Your jokes on Harriet Westbrook amuse me : it is a common error for people to fancy others in their own situation, but if I know anything about love, I am *not* in love." Still, a few days later, he had made up his mind with regard to her, and he wrote to tell Hogg, who was still at York : <sup>1</sup> " You will perhaps see me before you can answer this ; perhaps not, Heaven knows ! I shall certainly come to York, but *Harriet Westbrook* will

<sup>1</sup> The letter bears the Rhayader postmark ; there is no date, but it was probably written in the first week of August.

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decide whether now or in three weeks. Her father has persecuted her in a most horrible way, by endeavouring to compel her to go to school. She asked my advice: resistance was the answer, at the same time that I essayed to mollify Mr. W. in vain! And in consequence of my advice *she* has thrown herself upon *my* protection. I set off for London on Monday. How flattering a distinction!—I am thinking of ten million things at once. What have I said? I declare, quite *ludicrous*.<sup>1</sup> I advised her to resist. She wrote to say that resistance was useless, but that she would fly with me, and threw herself upon my protection. We shall have £200 a year; when we find it run short we must live, I suppose, upon love! Gratitude and admiration all demand that I should love her *for ever*. We shall see you at York. I will hear your arguments for matrimonialism, by which I am now almost convinced. I can get lodgings at York, I suppose. Your enclosure of £10 has arrived; I am now indebted to you £30. In spite of philosophy, I am rather ashamed of this unceremonious exsiccation of your financial river. But, indeed, my dear friend, the gratitude which I owe you for your society and attachment ought so far to overbalance this consideration as to

<sup>1</sup> Professor Dowden says, "The 'ludicrous' thing is that Harriet should have chosen as a protector a youth of nineteen, expelled from College, estranged in some degree from his family, and at the present moment in want of money" (*Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 174).

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leave me nothing but that. I must, however, pay you when I can. . . . I am thinking at once of ten million things. I shall come to live near you as Mr. Peyton. I shall be at 18 Sackville Street; at least direct there. Do not send any more cash; I shall raise supplies in London."

From this statement one gathers that Shelley had advised Harriet to resist her father's decision to send her back to school, but that, fearing she was not strong enough to defy her parent's wishes, she had offered to elope with Bysshe. We should remember that he had been in constant communication with Harriet since he first met her in January 1811, a matter of some seven months.<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Hogg, probably written about July 28, he had spoken of "a disinterested appreciation for what is in itself excellent," evidently with reference to Harriet, though he seemed to imply that for he he had no feelings of passion. But his correspondence with her and his general attitude may have encouraged her to confess her love. That he had paid her a good deal of attention was certainly known to her sister, and probably to her father. Bysshe's interest in Harriet, for instance, had shown itself in his attempt to move Mr. Westbrook in his determination that she should return to school.

<sup>1</sup> Hogg says, "The wooing continued for half a year at least" (*Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 422).

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Hogg's timely loan had made it possible for Bysshe to escape from the solitude of Cwm Elan. "Particular business has occasioned my sudden return," he wrote from London on August 10 to Miss Hitchener, but he did not tell her the nature of his business, namely that he had come to town to await Harriet Westbrook's final decision. To Hogg, who was in his confidence, he wrote on August 15, with less reserve: "The late perplexing occurrence which called me to town occupies my time, engrosses my thoughts. I shall tell you more of it when we meet, which I hope will be soon. . . . I am now returned to London; direct to me, as usual, at Graham's. My father is here, wondering, possibly, at my London business. He will be more surprised soon, possibly! My unfortunate friend, Harriet, is yet undecided; not with respect to me, but herself. How much, my dear friend, have I to tell you! In my leisure moments for thought, which since I wrote have been few, I have considered the important point on which you reprobated my hasty decision. The ties of love and honour are doubtless indissoluble, but by the brutish force of power they are delicate and satisfactory. Yet the arguments of impracticability, and, what is even worse, the disproportionate sacrifice which the female is called upon to make—these arguments, which you have urged in a manner immediately

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irresistible, I cannot withstand. Not that I suppose it to be likely that *I* shall directly be called upon to evince my attachment to either theory. I am become a perfect convert to matrimony, not from temporising, but from *your* arguments ; nor, much as I wish to emulate your virtues and liken myself to you, do I regret the prejudices of anti-matrimonialism from your example of assertion. No. The *one* argument, which you have urged so often with so much energy : the sacrifice made by the woman, so disproportioned to any which the man can give--this alone may exculpate me, were it a fault, from uninquiring submission to your superior intellect."

So Hogg's simple argument had won Shelley over to regard marriage at least as a measure of expediency. Harriet would have been aware of this change in Bysshe's views, and it may have decided her to take the final step.

Charles H. Grove, in his recollections of Shelley, said that his cousin's continued correspondence with Harriet Westbrook during his visit to Wales led to his return to London and subsequent elopement with her. In one of Bysshe's letters to Grove, belonging to this period, he spoke of "his summons to link his fate with another, closing his communication thus" in adapting the words of Macbeth :

"Hear it not, Percy, for it is a knell  
Which summons thee to heaven or to hell !"

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After leaving Wales Bysshe paid a short visit to Field Place ;<sup>1</sup> and while he was there he saw Tom Medwin's father, the Horsham lawyer, from whom he borrowed twenty-five guineas, but without informing him that he required the money to help him with the expenses of his forthcoming journey to Edinburgh. He also probably called on his uncle, Captain Pilfold.

On his return to town he went as usual to Lincoln's Inn Fields, and Charles Grove accompanied him when he called on Harriet at Chapel Street.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Shelley was now no longer blind to the fact that something was going on between Bysshe and the younger Miss Westbrook, as he evidently instructed Whitton to call on Mr. Grove (apparently John Grove), and to find out the exact state of affairs. The good lawyer was puzzled what to do, and how to prevent, if possible, such an awful calamity as a misalliance between Sir Bysshe's heir and the daughter of the retired coffee-house keeper. He may not have relished the prospect of encountering Bysshe, but from the following letter, dated August 26, the day after the birds had flown, he was evidently prepared to do anything at the bidding of his client—even to calling on Mr. Westbrook, or at

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Miss Hitchener, from London, August 10, 1811, "I shall be at Field Place to-morrow, and shall probably see you before September."

<sup>2</sup> Professor Dowden says that Bysshe had arranged his plans at John Grove's house without his knowledge, but with his cousin Charles as his aider and abettor (*Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 172).

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Carlton House. He was zealous enough to have gone to the Vatican if Mr. Shelley had so desired it.

“Mr. Grove is out of town or I should have seen him. I fear that by knowing so much of your son’s conduct as you must possess by his residing with you will cause you and Mrs. Shelley much additional anxiety, and you will no doubt do well to let him go elsewhere. An inquiry by me into his pursuits in this place must, as you know, be very difficult, and it is highly probable that the father [Mr. Westbrook] may be at least passive if not aiding in the intercourse between the young persons. Your authority alone can influence your son, and whether that influence will be sufficient to protect him against the extreme folly of his present pursuit I am led to doubt, but if you shall think proper to authorise me to call at the Prince of Wales and on your son and on Mr. Westbrook I will do so, but I have no hope of effecting your wish or of inducing your son to avoid any act of indiscretion—his will alone governs and leads his conduct.”

Sir Bysshe had been told of his grandson’s doings, as Whitton wrote to him on the same date as the above letter that he feared Mr. Shelley would have trouble with his son, who seems to be “ungovernable, and to have no will but his passions. I have offered,” he said, “to see him and others about him if his father shall

## Harriet Westbrook

authorise me to do so, but without his authority I shall not like to meddle with such a chicken, for he has much confidence, and I am not in the habit of receiving from young persons their indelicate conduct."

In his letter of October 11, 1811, to Miss Hitchener, Shelley gave her an account of the circumstances that led him to marry Harriet Westbrook. He was at that period attentively watching over his sister Elizabeth, "designing, if possible, to add her to the list of the good, the disinterested, and free." He therefore desired to learn something of the character of her friend Harriet, whom he asked to correspond with him. She complied, and, while he was in Wales, her frequent letters interested him, but he became alarmed at their despondent tone and her constant allusions to suicide. One letter, more despairing than the rest, caused Shelley to come to London. Her altered looks shocked him, and when he learnt the cause, that "she had become violently attached" to him and feared that he "should not return the attachment," he promised to unite his fate with hers. Her spirits revived while he was in London, and, on leaving her, he promised to return to town at her bidding. When, shortly afterwards, her father wanted her to go back to school, she wrote to Shelley, who came to London and proposed marriage.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ELOPEMENT, AND AFTER

Shelley elopes with Harriet Westbrook to Edinburgh—Their marriage—Appeals to his father—Hogg's arrival—His account of their life in Edinburgh—Captain Pilfold's friendliness and help—Mr. Shelley learns of the marriage, and stops supplies—Bysshe's letters to his father—Leaves Edinburgh for York—Mr. Shelley's correspondence with Hogg, senior—His reckless conclusions—Bysshe leaves York for Sussex—He reproves his father—Correspondence with Whitton—Graham and Elizabeth Shelley—The Duke of Norfolk's interest in Bysshe—Mr. Shelley frightened.

ONE evening, late in August 1811, probably Saturday, the 24th of that month, Bysshe made his way to a small coffee-house in Mount Street, near Mr. Westbrook's house in Chapel Street, and despatched a note to Harriet in which he named the hour on the following day that a hackney coach would be in waiting at the coffee-house to receive her. On Sunday morning, August 25, Charles Grove and Bysshe arrived at Mount Street some time before Harriet was expected. Breakfast was ordered and ended, and yet Harriet did not appear. While Bysshe waited, he amused himself by flinging across the street the shells of the oysters on which they had breakfasted, and said, "Grove, this is a *Shelley* business." Harriet at length appeared,

## The Elopement, and After

and the three were soon on their way to the Bull and Mouth Tavern in the city, from whence the coaches started for Edinburgh by way of York. But, as the mails did not leave till the evening, there were some hours of waiting before Charles Grove had bidden farewell to Bysshe and his bride.<sup>1</sup> They travelled from London to Edinburgh without breaking the journey, but at York Bysshe wrote a hasty note which was brought to Hogg's lodgings the next morning :

*P. B. Shelley to T. J. Hogg*

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—Direct to the Edinburgh post office—my own name. I passed to-night with the Mail. Harriet is with me. We are in a slight pecuniary distress. We shall have seventy-five pounds on Sunday ; until when can you send £10 ? Divide it in two.—Yours,

PERCY SHELLEY.

Whether Bysshe had decided to go to Edinburgh when he left London is not quite clear from the following letter to his father, which may have been written before he left town. Did he intend to go to York and from thence to Ireland via Holyhead ? If this were so, he probably altered his determination in the coach. His travelling companion a part of the way was a young Scotch advocate, to whom Bysshe con-

<sup>1</sup> This account of Bysshe's departure is derived from Professor Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. pp. 172-174.

## Shelley in England

fided the object of his journey. The young lawyer told them how to get married according to the law of Scotland, and, if Bysshe had ever seriously intended going to Ireland, he changed his mind and continued on his way to Edinburgh.

### *P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

[*Postmark* : HOUGHTON, Aug. 26, 1811.]

MY DEAR FATHER,—Doubtless you will be surprised at my sudden departure; you will be more surprised at its finish; but it is little worth the while of its inhabitants to be affected at the occurrences of this world.

I have always considered my clothes, papers, gun, &c., as my own property.

I cannot think, altho' I confess it has been hinted to me, that you will condescend to the pitiful revenge for the uncasiness which I may have occasioned, of detaining these. Will you direct them to Charles Grove, Esqr., Lincoln's Inn Fields.

At present I have little time.

You will hear from me at Holyhead more fully and particularly.—With sincerest respect, your ever affect.  
son,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

T. SHELLEY, Esq., M.P.,  
Field Place,  
Horsham,  
Sussex.

Bysshe had made a good way on his journey when he despatched this letter, and, as the postmark of

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Houghton-le-Spring shows, he was in the neighbourhood of Durham. Mr. Shelley endorsed it, as was his habit: "Sunday morning, ye 25th Aug., he borrowed £10 of Mr. Dunn, saying he was just come from Wales, and was going home directly he had paid his fare. Recd. this letter Aug. 27, by post."

As soon as this letter reached Mr. Shelley, he hastened up to London and summoned his lawyer to confer with him on its contents and Bysshe's elopement with Harriet. Perhaps he talked of disinheriting his son, for the abstract of the settlements of the Sussex estates and other deeds were got out and carefully scrutinised by Mr. Whitton, with the result that he found that Bysshe "was tenant in tail in remainder under both settlements, and that there was not any power of revocation and new appointment." Mr. Shelley, accompanied by Whitton, then proceeded to Chapel Street, and had a lengthy talk with Mr. Westbrook and his daughter Eliza, and obtained from them the circumstances of Harriet's elopement. On the following day, August 28, there was a further conference on the same subject, at which Mr. Shelley, Mr. Westbrook, Whitton, Grove (probably John), and Desse—Mr. Westbrook's solicitor—attended.<sup>1</sup> These meetings must have been far from pleasant:

<sup>1</sup> From information in Whitton's minute-book: August 27 and 28, 1811.

## Shelley in England

the only decision Mr. Shelley arrived at, of which we are sure, was a determination to stop Bysshe's allowance and to leave his letters unanswered.

Acting on the advice of his travelling companion, as soon as Bysshe arrived in Edinburgh, he took the preliminary steps for his marriage with Harriet. It was necessary, according to the law, first to obtain a proclamation of banns, entailing a residence of six weeks in the parish, and afterwards for the marriage to be solemnised by a minister of religion. In the absence of personal knowledge on the part of the session clerk that the parties had resided in the parish for the required time, or that they were unmarried, they were required to bring a certificate signed by two householders and an elder. Such a certificate, evidently falsified, was discovered some years ago.<sup>1</sup> It is contained in a register of certificates for the proclamation of banns of marriage "of soldiers, carters, smiths, and labourers," and is signed by "Percy Bysshe Shelley, as well by William Cumming and Patr. Murray." The certificate was afterwards entered in the books of the Register House, Edinburgh, on August 28, 1811.<sup>2</sup> Hitherto no evidence has been

<sup>1</sup> By Mr. James G. Ferguson, City Session Clerk at Edinburgh, among the city archives. See *Chambers's Journal*, March 31, 1900, for an interesting side-light on the subject.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley lost no time, as he could hardly have arrived at Edinburgh until the evening of August 27.

## The Elopement, and After

published that Shelley was actually married in Edinburgh. It is possible, however, now for the first time to give proof in the following certificate ; the date of the ceremony is unfortunately not stated.

In a document, however, connected with his re-marriage in 1814, the date is given as August 29 (the day after that on the certificate), when he was " joined in holy matrimony by the Rev. — Robertson, minister of the Church of Scotland, at his dwelling-house in the city of Edinburgh." From this wording it is not clear whether the minister's or Shelley's house was the place of marriage.<sup>1</sup> The following certificate of marriage is practically in the same words as the certificate of banns, but with the endorsement of the minister.

### *Marriage.*

EDINBURGH, *August 28, 1811.*

That Mr. Percy Bysshe Shelley, Farmer, and Miss Harriet Westbrook, St. Andrew's Church Parish, Daughter of Mr. John Westbrook, London.

That the parties are free, unmarried, of legal age, and not within the forbidden Degrees, and she has resided in Edinburgh upwards of six weeks preceding the proclamation of Banns is certified to me, for which I shall be answerable. And are orderly proclaimed in several Churches in this City in order to marriage,

<sup>1</sup> This document is given in full under 1814, where his re-marriage is described.

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and no objections made why the same may not be solemnised, is certified by

J. FETTES, D.S. Clerk.

Certified by Mr. Patrick Murray, Teacher, and Mr. William Cumming, both of Edinburgh.

Endorsed as follows :

The within designed Parties were married before  
Witnesses by me, JOSEPH ROBERTSON,  
Minister.

Bysshe had found lodgings at a handsome house in George Street. Peacock tells us that the journey had absorbed Shelley's stock of money, but he "immediately told his landlord who they were and what they had come for, and the exhaustion of their resources, and asked him if he would take them in and advance them money to get married, and carry them on till they could get a remittance. This the man agreed to do on condition that Shelley would treat him and his friends to a supper in honour of the occasion." It was therefore arranged accordingly. But, notwithstanding the landlord's assistance, Shelley had to repay him, and now his funds were very low. His bride could not be expected to subsist on the poet's meagre fare of bread and raisins, and no course remained to him but to apply in advance to his father for his quarterly allowance of £50.

# The Elopement, and After

*P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

EDINBURGH, *Aug.* 30, 1811.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I know of no one to whom I can apply with greater certainty of success when in distress than you. I must own that I am not so frugal as could be wished, but I know you are kind to forgive youthful errors, and will perhaps be good enough to enclose me a Dft. for £50. Mr. Graham will take care to forward your letter. There is not a creature in Edinburgh, 'tis as dull as London in the dog days . . . there is, however, much worth seeing; it rains now, but a friend of mine promises if it holds up to lionize me. Holyrood, Arthur's Seat, and the Castle will, of course, be objects of my attention.

If I move I shall continue to write, but as I remain here until the receipt of your answer, in consequence of having incurred a slight debt, all letters may be forwarded by Graham.

I hope Mother, Sister, and all are well; my love to them.—With great respect, your aff. Son,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

T. SHELLEY, Esq.,  
Miller's Hotel,  
Westr. Bridge,  
London.

[Readdressed]

Horsham,  
Sussex.

If not there, to be immediately forwarded.

Mr. Shelley paid not the slightest heed to his son's appeal; Captain Pilfold, however, was ready with some words of sympathy for his nephew. "To be confoundedly angry is all very well," wrote the bluff old

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Captain, "but to stop supplies is a great deal too bad." Mr. Westbrook was not any more accommodating than Mr. Shelley, for he also declined to help the young couple, with whom he made a show of being exceedingly angry.

It is noticeable that Bysshe does not mention a word about his marriage in this letter, but he speaks of a friend who promised to show him the wonders of Auld Reekie. Perhaps this friend was the young Scotch lawyer with whom he had struck up an acquaintance in the coach from London.

The long vacation had commenced, and Hogg was endeavouring to make up his mind where to spend it when Shelley's letter, announcing his flight to Edinburgh with Harriet, was put into his hands. Hogg wrote at once to his friend, promising to join him immediately, and a few days later—in the first week of September—he started out on his journey north. On arriving at Edinburgh, Hogg set about finding Shelley, whose address he obtained from the post office, and at length discovered him in the handsome front parlour of his lodgings in George Street. "He looked just as he used to look at Oxford," said Hogg, "and as he looked when I saw him last in April, in our trellised apartment, but now joyous at meeting again, not as then sad at parting." Hogg also met, for the first time, Shelley's "lovely young bride,

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bright as the morning—as the morning of that bright day on which we first met ; bright, blooming, radiant with youth, health, and beauty. . . . She was always pretty . . . smart, usually plain in her neatness ; without a spot, without a wrinkle, not a hair out of its place.” The newly-married couple gave their guest a warm welcome ; they had received his letter, and his arrival had been awaited eagerly. Shelley exclaimed, “ We have met at last once more, and we will never part again ! ” He insisted that Hogg should have a bed in the house, and one was accordingly provided.

A walk was proposed, and, as Harriet wished first to see the palace of “ the unfortunate Queen Mary,” they went to look at Holyrood House, which Hogg described as “ a beggarly palace in truth.” Bysshe had to go home to write letters, and he left Harriet in the charge of Hogg, who was to take her to the summit of Arthur’s Seat, where she was unsuccessful in persuading her cavalier to wait for Bysshe, who, she thought, might join them when he had finished his writing. Hogg tells us, among other things connected with these days in Edinburgh, of Bysshe’s morbid sensibility to strange discordant sounds : how he shrank from the unmusical voice of the lodging-house servant—a Caledonian maiden—and how Hogg and Harriet took a mischievous delight in tormenting

## Shelley in England

him by making the girl speak in his presence. When Shelley went every morning to the post office for his letters, "of which he received a prodigious number," he returned with supplies of fine honey, and still possessing his "sweet tooth" he much relished it. Hogg teased him, saying, "It approaches cannibalism to feed on it; indeed, it is too like eating Harriet! I think you could eat Harriet herself!" "So I would," replied Bysshe, "if she were as good to eat, and I could replace her as easily!"

One Sunday, while they were taking a harmless stroll in Princes Street, Bysshe had an experience of the mirthless character of Scottish Puritanism. He happened to laugh aloud at some remark of Hogg, when he was reprov'd by a passer-by, who said, "You must not laugh openly, in that fashion, young man. If you do you will most certainly be convened." Hogg tried to scare his friend by explaining that he was in danger of being "cast into prison, and eventually banished from Scotland, for laughing in the public streets and ways on the Christian Sabbath." He was, however, tempted one Sunday to attend worship at a kirk, but the lengthy discourse of the preacher resulted in thoroughly depressing Shelley, and his friend never saw him so dejected, desponding, or despairing. On another occasion, when they attended the meeting of a Catechist, Shelley was affected differently.

## The Elopement, and After

The good man had asked "Wha was Adam?" and, receiving no answer, he angrily inquired "Wha's the Deel?" at which Shelley burst forth into a shrieking laugh, and rushed wildly out of doors.

Shelley obtained plenty of books, some of these possibly from a public library with the aid of the young advocate, his fellow passenger on his journey to Edinburgh. Among these books was a treatise of Buffon, which so charmed him that he made a careful translation of it with a view to its publication. While he was busy in the mornings with this work, Harriet set herself the task of translating a story from the French of Madame Cottin, and having completed two volumes she copied them out in "her neat, flowing, and legible feminine hand." As Hogg remarks, this feat proves that Harriet was far from being illiterate, as she has sometimes been represented. He adds that he had seldom, if ever, met a girl who had read so much for her years. But he never heard her speak on the subject of religion, in which he thought she was entirely uninstructed. Her chief delight was reading aloud, of which exercise she was never weary, and Hogg found it agreeable to listen to her. Bysshe, however, was not so attentive, and when, overcome with his fits of drowsiness, he fell off to sleep, his neglect was fiercely resented by his studious young wife.

While this happy trio were spending their days in

## Shelley in England

conversation, walks, and study, Captain Pilfold sent his "peccant" nephew "cheerful, friendly, hearty letters," and what is more, supplies of money. Mr. Shelley, who had perhaps received by September 8 but scanty information respecting his son's elopement with Harriet, addressed the following letter on that date to Hogg's father: "I wrote to you from London by the advice of a gentleman in the law, who I had advised with respecting my son having withdrawn himself from my protection, and set off for Scotland with a young female, though at that time it was conjectured he might make York in his way.

"This morning I have a letter from a gentleman, who had heard from him, that he was at Edinburgh, and that H. had joined him there. I think it right to give you the information, as from one parent to another, both of whom have experienced so much affliction and anxiety. God only knows what can be the end of all this disobedience."

Mr. Hogg replied that he had learnt that his son had left his lodgings in York, stating that he would be absent for a few days, without saying when he would return, or where he was going. He concluded that he had gone to Edinburgh to join Bysshe, but that, as he was only allowing him such money as was necessary for his expenses, he expected that he would shortly return to York.

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The news of Bysshe's marriage had evidently thrown Mr. Shelley into a violent state of agitation, and had caused him to seek the advice of his friends. He naturally found them very willing to listen attentively to all that he had to tell them about his son's elopement, but his want of reserve had given rise to a good deal of idle gossip which, so far from helping him, had tended to increase his troubles. Some of these rumours must have reached Mr. Whitton, who was taking the waters at Cheltenham, as he wrote from that place to his client on September 16, and offered him some sound advice. He said: "Very few indeed among our friends who, though they will talk a great deal about our family concerns, and particularly such a circumstance as has occurred in yours, will take the trouble of acting for our relief, and repeated conversations and letters about it makes a source of eternal agitation to your mind and feelings, and it cannot heal your wound. Do let me entreat of you to cease correspondence and conversation on the topic unless in the moment of privacy with Mrs. Shelley. Be assured that I say this with the sincerest wish to add stability to your resolution and strengthen your confidence in the propriety of that determination which you state you are come to. Your correspondence with him, and his with you and your family, produce

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great discomfort and renew all the feelings of disquiet and disgust.”

Notwithstanding Captain Pilford's helping hand, Bysshe was now feeling the pinch of poverty. It was to him a new and painful experience. He had learnt either from his uncle or from Hogg that his father was aware of his elopement, and that he was justly angry. He realised that it was not the time to apply for his allowance, but that he owed his father an apology.

### *P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

EDINBURGH, *Sept.* 15, 1811.

MY DEAR FATHER,—As some time has now elapsed since I did myself the pleasure of last addressing you, forgive me, if presuming on the inaccuracy of the post, or your own engagements of importance, that I repeat the request contained in my last.

Yet pardon me if the sincerity with which I am ever desirous to distinguish our communications compels me to unfold to you the doubts which perhaps I insult your kindness by harbouring. It has been insinuated, altho' I cannot for a moment cherish the idea, that your displeasure concerning my late proceedings has been awakened.

I can well imagine that you were surprised, nay, am willing to admit that I perhaps acted with impoliteness in quitting you without previous information, yet you surely will not regard this when you well know that business of importance superseded the attention due to these considerations.

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Proceeding on the idea suggested the vague information above alluded to that you were displeased with me, permit me with the utmost humility to deprecate any anger on your part, perhaps also I may succeed in pointing out its inutility and inadequacy to the happiness of anyone whom it may concern. . . . To distrust your own mind (the first consideration) which the duties of legislation demand to be unruffled, which the happiness of your family requires calm, which your own peace needs to be unaffected by the base passion of anger, is certainly as wrong as it is inconsistent with the Christian forbearance and forgiveness with which you are so eminently adorned. The world too, which considers marriage as so venial a failing, would think the punishment of a father's anger infinitely disproportioned to the offence committed.

That two beings who like each other's society should live together by the law of the land, is too conformable to the opinion of the world for its approbation to justify any resentment on your part. My mother, also, and sisters, in whose eyes the very venerable institution cannot fail to be regarded as at least innocent, cannot fail to be sorry if deprived (excuse the vanity) of my society. These points of consideration I offer, more abstractedly considered and as general remarks rather than as applicable to you, who doubtlessly have long perceived their truth; you, who are the best and kindest of fathers, and as such possess the most dutiful and aff. Son,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

This letter was duly sent to Whitton, who, after reading it, wrote to Mr. Shelley: "I return you the extraordinary production of your son. How lost are

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his feelings towards you and his mother and sisters, and how much does he forget the duties of that situation which he fills, after the education he has received.”

In the letter that follows Bysshe endeavoured to argue his case from what he imagined should be the point of view of a person professing a belief in Christianity. It shows us the simple-minded side of Shelley's character to suppose that a plea for forgiveness on such a basis would have any weight with his father. Bysshe admitted that he had given his father cause for anger, but, had Mr. Shelley been in any degree discerning, he might have detected the pathos underlying the appeal, or even the comicality of the circumstance, that the author of *The Necessity of Atheism* should lecture him for neglecting to act up to his religious belief.

Bysshe feared that on seeing his direction on the letter his father might decide to send it unopened to Whitton. The very personal nature of its contents was such that he would have much disliked the idea of its falling into the unsympathetic hands of the family lawyer. He therefore resorted to the pardonable subterfuge of getting the letter addressed in Hogg's handwriting, which he supposed was not known to Mr. Shelley. Whether the trick succeeded it is not possible to say, but Mr. Shelley endorsed the letter in pencil, “Hogg's direction.”

# The Elopement, and After

*P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

EDINBURGH, *Sept.* 27, 1811.

MY DEAR FATHER,—You have not condescended to answer either of my letters altho' the subject of them was such as demanded at least your acknowledgment of their arrival. I can no longer profess ignorance as to the cause of this silence, nor refrain from making remarks as to the cause of it ; on the supposition of its bare possibility I offered a few in my last, they were respectful, and such as you have no right to be offended with, considering that the event has turned out as my suspicions anticipated. I am married---this is a circumstance which you have no right to see with regret. It ought to be the ambition of a real parent to see his son honorably established ; you dare not assert the contrary of my present situation, it is such as the laws of my country sanction, such as the very religion which you profess regards as necessary to the true state of its votaries. I have availed myself of my civil rights in obtaining to myself the legal sanction of this proceeding ; I have neither transgressed custom, policy, nor even received notions of religion. My conduct in this respect will bear the severest scrutiny, nor do I suppose you will find one bold enough in paradox to assert that what I have done is criminal. . . . That I did not consult you on the subject is because you could not have placed yourself in my situation, nor however well calculated you may be to judge in other respects, as I suppose you neither aspire to infallibility or intuition, it would be next to impossible to calculate on the meer question of the taste of another, particularly, as your general tastes

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are diametrically opposed to his. Let us admit even that it is an injury that I have done ; let us admit that I have wilfully inflicted pain on you, and no moral considerations can palliate the heinousness of my offence. Father, are you a Christian ? it is perhaps too late to appeal to your love for me. I appeal to your duty to the God whose worship you profess, I appeal to the terrors of that day which you believe to seal the doom of mortals, then clothed with immortality—Father, are you a Christian ? Judge not, then, lest you be judged. Remember the forgiveness of injuries which Christians profess and if my crime were even deadlier than parricide, forgiveness is your duty. What ! will you not forgive ? How then can your boasted professions of Christianity appear to the world, since if you forgive not you can be no Christian—do not rather these hypocritical assumptions of the Christian character lower you in real virtue beneath the *libertine* atheist, for a moral one would practise what you preach, and quietly put in practise that forgiveness which all your vauntings cannot make you exert. Forgive, then ! and let me see that at least your professions do not bely your practise, rather let the world see it : for if you fear not God as your Judge, this tribunal will sit in judgement on your actions. I have done nothing but what is right and natural. Nothing is more common than elopements between young people, the unforgiving spirit of fathers is now become banished to antiquated farces and silly novels, you hope perhaps to set the fashion, but I have much hope that the world rather than imitating, would laugh at your precedent. But by forgiveness I do not mean that barren exertion which contents itself with saying, “ I forgive,” and then

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sits down contented as having discharged its duty. Nor did Jesus Christ mean this, you must bring forth fruits meet for repentance; you must treat me as a son, and by the common institutions of society your superfluites ought to go towards my support. I have no right not to expect it.

What I have said here which appears severe applies to nothing but your unforgiveness. No son can be so dutiful so respectful as me, and the above remarks are merely urged as what would be my opinion in case you act differently from that mild character which you have hitherto supported.

Adeu. Love to Mother, Sisters, &c.—I remain Your  
aff. dut. P. B. SHELLEY.

Will you be so kind as to send me this quarter's due, to Edinburgh post office, immediately, £50.

[Addressed]

For TIMOTHY SHELLEY, Esq.,  
Field Place,  
Horsham, Sussex.

M.P.

It had now become necessary for Hogg to return to York. He spoke of having been absent for six weeks, which would have meant the end of October, but it was in the first week of that month that he left Edinburgh. Bysshe and Harriet decided to go with him, and remain in York during the year that he was to pass in that city, and when he was free, they were all to remove to London. He and his friend Hogg already considered their property "as common."

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Edinburgh had already grown distasteful to Bysshe. He disliked the grime of the city as much as he scorned the commercialism of its citizens, and he was anxious to get away from the place. It would not, however, have been possible to accompany Hogg on his journey south, but for the timely help of Captain Pilfold. "My uncle is a most generous fellow," he wrote to Miss Hitchener,<sup>1</sup> "had he not assisted us, we should have been chained to the filth and commerce of Edinburgh. Vile as aristocracy is, commerce—proud ignorance and illiterateness—is more contemptible."

Notwithstanding that Shelley's resources were much reduced, and Hogg's could not have been much better, they decided for the comfort of Harriet to perform the journey to York by post-chaise. They passed the first night at Belford, and the second at Darlington, and on the third day they reached York. Bysshe chafed at the narrow confinement of the chaise and the bother of changing horses every post, "and at Berwick, when Harriet had taken her seat and all was ready he was missing." He was captured, however, by Hogg, who found him "standing on the walls in a drizzling rain, gazing mournfully on the wild dreary sea, with looks not less wild and dreary." Harriet's occupation in the chaise was to read aloud incessantly one of

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Miss Hitchener, from York, October 10, 1811.

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Holcroft's novels. Bysshe, who found it tedious, sometimes sighed deeply and inquired, "Is it necessary to read all that, Harriet dear?" but she was inexorable, and declined to skip.

The narrow, crooked old streets of York, as seen at the close of a dull autumnal day, did not, as Hogg tells us, impress Bysshe favourably, and the dingy lodgings in Coney Street, which they found at the house of two needy mantua-makers, completed his dismal first impression of the city.

Apparently as soon as they arrived Bysshe deemed the opportunity a favourable one to inform his father of his change of address. It was natural that he should show some resentment at the parental silence, especially in his not heeding Bysshe's request that his clothes and other things might be sent to him. The letter, as in the case of his last from Edinburgh, was addressed by Hogg, a fact which is attested by Mr. Shelley, "Hogg's direction. Received Oct. 6."

### *P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

MISS DANCER'S, CONEY STREET, YORK,  
*Thursday even. [Postmark, Oct. 5, 1811.]*

MY DEAR FATHER,—Having changed my residence I beg leave to inform you of it; I have not heard from you in answer to my last. I do not at present endeavor to account for it. You may suppose that I am in want of the clothes which I left at Field Place,

## Shelley in England

may I beg you to send them, as also the books and papers, which can be of little use to any other. Even supposing that you are offended, do not permit me to suppose you so meanly revengeful as to inflict the pitiful inconvenience of detaining these things. I expected long before this to have heard from you. Your silence has occasioned considerable derangement of my plans. I have not long arrived at York, but take the earliest opportunity of informing you of it. This will afford excuse for my brevity. Love to Mother, Sisters, &c.—Your aff. dut. Son,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed in Hogg's handwriting]

For TIMOTHY SHELLEY, Esq.,

Field Place,

Horsham, Sussex.

M.P.

Mr. Shelley received other tidings of Bysshe's arrival at York, for Mr. Hogg wrote on Oct. 8 to tell him of his son's return after the sojourn in Edinburgh with Bysshe. Young Hogg accounted for his prolonged absence by his receiving no remittances from England, but how at last he obtained the money necessary for his travelling expenses Mr. Hogg was not able to explain, as neither he nor his friends had supplied him with any. He was not aware that the young people had spared themselves no expense, and had performed the journey in comfort by post-chaise in easy stages. "My son," he said, "makes no mention of a female being of their party. Whether your son

## The Elopement, and After

is now at York or in its vicinity I have not yet heard, though I have made inquiry—perhaps you have heard of the place of his abode. My son has the impudence to write for money, which I have at present denied, for his behaviour in this last business has been such that I shall only allow him what will be necessary to keep him at York in the strictest manner. Oh, my dear Sir! we have been truly unfortunate in our Sons. May our children who are now dutiful by the Grace of God continue so, and be a comfort to us!”

Bysshe now wrote to Miss Hitchener<sup>1</sup> to tell her of his marriage. He guessed that the news would have reached her from the local gossips, but he felt that he owed her an explanation that he, a professed atheist, should choose to subject himself to the ceremony of marriage. He admitted that it was “useless to attempt by singular examples to renovate the face of society, until reasoning has made so comprehensive a change as to emancipate the experimentalist from the resulting evils, and the prejudice with which his opinion (which ought to have weight, for the sake of virtue) would be heard by the immense majority.” Would his marriage, of which he had not given Miss Hitchener a hint in his letters, put an end to his correspondence with her? He enjoyed writing to her,

<sup>1</sup> From York, October 8, 1811.

## Shelley in England

as she was probably the one correspondent to whom he could unburden his soul without restraint. "Will you write to me?" he asked. "Shall we proceed in our discussion of Nature and morality? Nay, more—will you be my friend, may I be yours? The shadow of worldly impropriety is effaced by *my* situation, our strictest intercourse would excite none of those disgusting remarks with which *females* of the present day think right to load the friendships of the opposite sexes. Nothing would be transgressed by your even living with us. Could you not pay us a visit? My dear friend Hogg, that noble being, is with me, and will be always, but my wife will abstract from our intercourse the shadow of impropriety."

Miss Hitchener did not accept the invitation, but she consented to pursue the correspondence. Bysshe wrote again at once, addressing her as "My dearest friend (for I will call you so), *you* who understand my motives to action which I flatter myself unisonise with your own. . . ." He told her that he intended to be at Cuckfield on Friday night, and added, "That mistaken man, my father, has refused us money, and commanded that our names should never be mentioned. Sophisticated by falsehood as society is I had thought that this blind resentment had long been banished to the regions of dulness, comedies, and

## The Elopement, and After

farces, or was used merely to augment the difficulties, and consequently the attachment of the hero and heroine of a modern novel. I have written frequently to this thoughtless man, and am now determined to visit him, in order to try the force of truth, tho' I must confess I consider it nearly as hyperbolical as 'music rending the knotted oak.'"

Bysshe's belongings were at length sent off from Field Place; perhaps his mother had heard from Mr. Shelley that he was in want of his clothes, and she arranged for them to be despatched. But neither she nor Mr. Shelley sent him a word to say that his request had been complied with; this office was left for the waggoner to perform. It is characteristic of Bysshe that these letters to his father are singularly wanting in tact, and that they become less and less tactful. He made the mistake of judging Mr. Shelley by his correspondence and his actions, which were often very foolish. But he could only recognise his own point of view; otherwise he would have remembered his father's high opinion of his own dignity, and his obstinacy. Bysshe undoubtedly wished to be forgiven, but he could hardly have chosen a more unfortunate way of addressing his father than by criticising his actions.

# Shelley in England

*P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

[*Postmark : YORK, Oct. 12, 1811.*]

DEAR FATHER,—The waggoner has written to inform me that my property is sent . . but does it not look as if your resentment was not to be supported by reason that you have declined to write yourself ?

I cannot avoid thinking thus, nor expressing my opinion ; but silence, especially on so important a subject as I urged, looks as if you confessed the erroneousness of your proceedings, at the same time that your passions impel you to persist in them. I do not say this is illiberal, a person who can once persuade himself as you have done that every opinion adopted by the majority is correct, must be nearly indifferent to this charge ; I do not say it is immoral, as illiberality involves a portion of immorality, but it is emphatically hostile to your own interest, to the opinion which the world will form of your virtues. *If* you are a professor of Christianity, which I am not, I need not recal to your recollection “ Judge not lest thou shouldst be judged.”

I confess I write this more to discharge a duty of telling you what I think, than hoping that my representations will be effectual. We have taken widely different views of the subject in question. *Obedience* is in my opinion a word which should have no existence . . . you regard it as necessary. . .

Yes, you can command it. The institutions of society have made you, tho' liable to be misled by passion and prejudice like others, the *Head of a family* ; and I confess it is almost natural for minds not of the highest order to value even the errors whence they derive thier importance.

## The Elopement, and After

Adeiu, answer this.—I would be your aff. dut.  
Son, PERCY B. SHELLEY.

In his father's handwriting at foot :

Recd. the 15th Oct. 1811.

[Addressed]

T. SHELLEY, Esq., M.P.,  
Field Place,  
Horsham, Sussex.

[*Postmark* : York, Oct. 12, 1811.]

Shelley's departure from York was delayed for some days, but before he left for Sussex he decided to appeal to his grandfather, to whom he had never before written. For that reason he hoped that the old baronet might induce his father to forgive him. Sir Bysshe, who had eloped with his first bride, might have shown some sympathy for his grandson. But Bysshe was mistaken in thinking that his grandfather, with all his wealth, would be willing to spare him something. He was evidently unaware that the old gentleman had already been consulted by Mr. Shelley with regard to the sequel to the Oxford misfortune, and had advised a course that amounted to starving the culprit into submission.

*P. B. Shelley to Sir Bysshe Shelley*

MISS DANCER'S,  
CONEY STREET, YORK,  
Oct. 13, 1811.

SIR,—Excuse me, if never having addressed you before, I appeal in time of misfortune to your bene-

## Shelley in England

volence. I have forfeited I think unjustly my father's esteem, for having consulted my own taste in marriage. If there is a question important to happiness it is this; certainly *he* whom the question most nearly concerns has the best right to decide upon its merits. Obedience in this case is misplaced, inasmuch as morality can be nothing but a means of high happiness, and whenever an advanced opinion on it militates with this essential principle, reason justly questions its correctness. I am accustomed to speak my opinion unreservedly; this has occasioned me some misfortunes, but I do not therefore cease to speak as I think. Language is given us to express ideas . . . he who fetters it is a BIGOT and a TYRANT, from these have my misfortunes arisen. . . .

I expect from your liberality and justice no unfavorable construction of what fools in power would denominate *insolence*.

This is not the spirit in which I write. I write in the spirit of truth and candor. If you will send me some money to help me and my wife (and I know you are not ungenerous) I will add to my respect for a grandfather my love for a preserver.

Adeiu [*sic*].—Most respectfully yours,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

Sir BYSSHE SHELLEY, Bart.,  
Horsham,  
Sussex.

Three days after Bysshe left York he arrived at his uncle's house at Cuckfield. He performed the journey on the outside of the coach, and, as he told Miss

## The Elopement, and After

Hitchener,<sup>1</sup> he did not sleep because his mind was so full of projects for "accumulating money," not for selfish motives, as he explained, but for the leisure that it would give for its employment in the forwarding of truth. He also probably found plenty of time to think of ways and means for approaching his father.

Mr. Shelley's letter of September 8 to Mr. Hogg had naturally given him cause for alarm when he read that Bysshe had gone off to Edinburgh in the company of "a young female," and that young Hogg had joined him. But Mr. Shelley had foolishly added in another letter that he would not be surprised if Bysshe left the young woman on young Hogg's hands. Mr. Hogg evidently wrote to warn his son of the danger that he ran in associating with Bysshe, who soon heard from his friend in the matter. The fact that Bysshe had left Harriet in the care of Hogg during his temporary absence from York added some point to Mr. Shelley's base suggestion, and had other unhappy results. He had blundered badly, and, as it seemed to Bysshe, from his next letter, it was the last of many spiteful acts of persecution.

We will now, however, for the sake of continuity,

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Elizabeth Hitchener, October 10 and October 12 (?), 1811. The latter letter was undated, and it is now obvious, in the light of this new correspondence, that it was written some days subsequent to the conjectured date of October 12.

## Shelley in England

give Mr. John Hogg's letter, which was written three days after Bysshe's passionate remonstrance.

*John Hogg to Timothy Shelley*

NORTON HOUSE, Oct. 21, 1811.

DEAR SIR,—I return you my most grateful thanks for your very kind letter of to-day, and I think it proper to inform you that I received a letter from York, stating that your son left that place (it is supposed for London) about the 18th, leaving his lady to the protection of my son, saying he should return in about a week or ten days. Mrs. Hogg and I were greatly alarmed at this information, thinking it highly improper that they should be left together, and remembering what you said in a former letter, that you should not be surprised at your son's leaving his lady on my son's hands.

Mrs. Hogg thought it proper to write to her, telling her how very imprudent it was for her to be left with our son, and also informing her that he had no money to support her in Mr. Shelley's absence, that she hoped she would by no means continue with him, and pitying her situation, offer'd to write to her friends. To this she wrote a very civil answer, much in the stile of a Gentlewoman, thanking Mrs. H. for her kindness, but declining her service for the present. I am sorry to say I had a letter from your son about a week since declaring that it was his firm resolution never to part from my son—and my son declares he will not give up your son's friendship on any account. How this business is to end God only knows. I really know not how to act. I find they are in debt at York.

I did all I could to get them once separated, and was

## The Elopement, and After

happy in succeeding, and was at much expense in placing my son at York with a Barrister for a year, hoping that absence would dissolve our son's unfortunate friendship before I entered him of Lincoln's Inn. I have been disappointed, and all my hopes are banished!!! Oh, my dear Sir! I am almost heart-broken, and so is my wife! We flattered ourselves that one day we should have seen him an ornament to his profession, and no expense from my moderate fortune should have been spared to have made him so—he was well and religiously brought up I can assure you; every person here and in the neighbourhood loved and esteemed him! I can add no more! I shall say with the Psalmist: "It is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I may learn thy Statutes!"

Mrs. Hogg begs to unite with me in wishing every consolation to you and yours.—I am, dear Sir, your obliged humble st.,  
JOHN HOGG.

[Addressed]

T. SHELLEY, Esq., M.P.,  
Field Place,  
Near Horsham,  
Sussex.

### *P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

[Endorsed by Mr. Shelley, "Received Oct. 18, 1811."]

DEAR FATHER,—I understand you have written to Mr. Hogg of Stockton. I know not what your letter contained, but by some ill effects resulting from it I discover that you have said something which has greatly prejudiced the relations of my friend against me.

This is a cowardly, base, contemptible expedient

## Shelley in England

of persecution: is it not enough that you have deprived me of the means of subsistence (which means, recollect, you *unequivocally* promised), but that you must take advantage of the defencelessness which *our* relation entails upon me, to *libel* me. Have you forgotten what a libel is? or is memory so *very treacherous* that it does not tell you the danger you stood in from your misrepresentations of Stockdale the bookseller . . . the mere laws of your country then defend others against your injuries, to these I cannot have recourse. You have treated me *ill, vilely*. When I was expelled for Atheism you wished I had been killed in Spain. The desire of its consummation is very like the crime, perhaps it is well for me that the laws of England punish murder, and that *cowardice* shrinks from thier animadversion.

I shall take the first opportunity of seeing you; if *you* will not hear my name *I* will pronounce it. Think not I am an insect whom injuries destroy . . . had I money enough I would meet you in London and hollow in your ears Bysshe, Bysshe, Bysshe . . . aye, Bysshe till you're deaf.

[Addressed]

T. SHELLEY, Esq., M.P.,  
Field Place,  
Horsham, Sussex.

Bysshe was as good as his word, and called on his father on Sunday, October 20, and learnt that it was only possible to discuss the question of his allowance through Mr. Whitton, to whom he therefore wrote for an appointment.

## The Elopement, and After

But in the meantime, on Monday, Oct. 21, the day after Bysshe called at Field Place, Mr. Shelley wrote the following note to Captain Pilford :

“FIELD PLACE, Oct. 21, 1811.

“Mr. Shelley understands his son is with Captain Pilfold. Mr. S. begs to apprise Captain P. that his son's irrational notions, and the absence of all sentiment of Duty and affection, and the unusual spirit of Resistance to any controul has determined Mr. S. not to admit him, but to place everything respecting him into the hands of Mr. Whitton, that no other person may interfere.”

[Addressed]

TO CAPTAIN PILFOLD, R.N.,  
Cuckfield.

*P. B. Shelley to W. Whitton*

CAPT. PILFOLD'S, R.N.,  
CUCKFIELD, SUSSEX,  
*October 20, 1811.*

SIR,—Understanding that pecuniary matters which concern me are entrusted to you, I beg to know, *by return of post*, where I can see you in Town. I intend to bring a friend with me.—Sir, yours' hum. servt.,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

WHITTON, Esq.,  
Grove House,  
Camberwell, Surrey.

[*Postmark : Oct. 21, 1811.*]

While Bysshe was in Sussex he went to see Sir Bysshe ; it would be interesting to have details of the

## Shelley in England

conversation between the boy and his old grandfather, but such can only be supplied by the imagination. Mr. Shelley, however, in writing to Whitton on October 23 briefly referred to the visit :

“The youngster call'd on him and behav'd very well. He told him to be dutyful and obedient and he would be receiv'd when he properly conducted himself, thank'd him for his advice and went away.”

Although Bysshe was now an outcast from his father's house, and not worth sixpence, as Whitton had bluntly put it, he concluded that, in order to “obviate future difficulties,” he should make marriage settlements. Accordingly, before he left Cuckfield, he wrote to ask Mr. Medwin, senior, to undertake this business for him. He had evidently seen the Horsham lawyer a day or so before, and sought his advice in regard to the negotiations with his father. As a precaution he intended to be re-married. He said, “I wish the sum settled on my wife in case of my death to be £700 per annum. The maiden name is Harriett Westbrook with two T's. You will be so good as to address me at Mr. Westbrook's, 23 Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square. We most probably go to London to-morrow. We shall see Whitton, when I shall neither forget your advice nor cease to be grateful for it.” Captain Pilfold had consented to accompany Bysshe to town, and he may have intended

## The Elopement, and After

while he was there to make an attempt at conciliating his father-in-law.

Whitton, however, declined Shelley's request to see him, and he gave his reason in a letter to Sir Bysshe bearing the date of October 22 ; he said, " The tenour and manner of his letter bespeaks his consequence, so I have desired him not to take the trouble of the journey from Captain Pilfold's, Cuckfield, but to communicate his sentiments in writing." <sup>1</sup>

So Bysshe at once complied with the lawyer's request, and addressed to him the following brief note :

*P. B. Shelley to William Whitton*

TURK'S COFFEE HOUSE,  
Tuesday evening,  
[October 22, 1811.]

" Mr. P. B. Shelley being referred to Mr. Whitton on application for an allowance of £200 per an. promised by his father, begs to know in what manner its arrangement is made. Mr. P. B. S. being in haste to quit Town for a remote part of the Kingdom begs the favour of an immediate answer."

Whitton replied on the following day, and told him that his father's communications had been of a very painful nature, resulting from Bysshe's correspondence and the manner in which he had treated him. Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Shelley wrote to Miss Hitchener when he returned to York : " We did not call on Whitton as we passed. We find he means absolutely nothing ; he talks of disrespect, duty, &c."

## Shelley in England

Shelley was determined to stop supplies until he could be satisfied that Bysshe's "future conduct will be directed by a judgment consonant to his duty to him as a parent." It remained for him to consider the serious question of his father's injured feelings, and to seek a restoration of his confidence.

While Bysshe was at York, he seems to have formed the impression, whether rightly or wrongly, that his mother was contriving a match between his sister Elizabeth and Edward Fergus Graham. How he got this impression it is impossible to say, unless Captain Pilfold had repeated in a letter to his nephew some idle local gossip. Bysshe told his mother, perhaps when he was at Field Place on Sunday, October 20, that he did not come from York on his own business, but to inform her of this rumour. He may also have had some conversation with Elizabeth on the subject, that confirmed him in his impression.

Young Graham's father, who had been in the army, was employed in some capacity by Mr. Shelley, and acted as his factotum. Hogg remembered old Mr. Graham making tea, when he and Bysshe dined with Mr. Shelley at his hotel during their stay at Poland Street. Edward Graham had been brought up in Mr. Shelley's house, and he and Bysshe, according to the statement of one who knew them both, were like brothers. When Graham, later, gave proofs of a talent



ELIZABETH LADY SHELLEY

*After the picture by George Romney, R.A.,  
in the possession of Sir John Shelley, Bart.*



## The Elopement, and After

for music, Mr. Shelley bore the expenses of his training, and he went to London to become a pupil of Joseph Woelff, a well-known German musician of the day. Bysshe wrote songs to be set to music by Graham, who made himself useful to his patron's son when he was in town during his Eton and Oxford days. "Direct me to Graham's," is a frequent request in Shelley's earlier letters, which likewise contained numerous commissions for his friend. Bysshe could not resist the opportunity of referring, in the following request, to his father's note to Captain Pilfold, which, as Mr. Shelley subsequently observed, remained unanswered.

### *P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

CUCKFIELD, Oct. 22, 1811.

DR. SIR,—I would thank you to deliver the enclosed to my mother; *very* much obliged for this morn's intimation to my uncle.—Yours, &c.,

P.<sup>th</sup>B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

T. SHELLEY, Esq., M.P.,  
Field Place,  
Horsham, Sussex.

### *P. B. Shelley to Mrs. Timothy Shelley*

CAPT. PILFOLD'S,

[Undated. Oct. 22, 1811.]

DEAR MOTHER,—I had expected before this, to have heard from you on a subject so important as that of

## Shelley in England

my late communication. I now expect to hear from you, unless you desire the publicity of my sister's intended marriage with Graham. . . . You tell me that you care not for the opinion of the world; this contempt for its consideration is noble if accompanied by consciousness of rectitude; if the contrary, it is the last resort of unviêled misconduct, is the daringness of despair, not the calmness of fortitude. You ask me if *I* suspect you . . . I do; my suspicions of your motives are strong, and such as I insist upon should be either confirmed or refuted.

I suspect your motives for *so violently, so persecutingly* desiring to unite my sister Elizabeth to the music master Graham. I suspect that it was intended to shield *yourself* from that suspicion which at length has fallen on you. If it is unjust, prove it. I give you a fair opportunity—it depends on yourself to avail yourself of it. Write to me [at Mr. Westbrook's, 23 Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square.]<sup>1</sup>—Your son,

P. B. SHELLEY.

You had better acquaint my Father with the debt with Mrs. Bowley, *he* is the proper person to do away with the obligation.

[Addressed]

MRS. SHELLEY.

*P. B. Shelley to Elizabeth Shelley*

CUCKFIELD, Oct. 22, 1811.

I write to inform you that my mother has recieved a letter from me, on the subject of Graham's projected

<sup>1</sup> The words within square brackets have been struck out.

## The Elopement, and After

union with you. My mother may shew the letter to my father . . . in this case do you speak truth.—  
Your brother, PERCY SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

MISS SHELLEY,  
Field Place, Horsham.

Nothing came of this affair ; but Shelley appears to have been convinced that something was wrong. He seems to have talked the matter over with Miss Hitchener at Captain Pilfold's, for he wrote to her, after his return to York,<sup>1</sup> the following obscure remarks :  
“I observed that you were much shocked at my mother's depravity. I have heard some reasons (and as mere reasons they are satisfactory) that there is no such thing as moral depravity. But it does not prove the non-existence of a thing that is not discoverable by reason ; *feeling* here affords us sufficient proofs.”<sup>2</sup>

Neither Mrs. Shelley nor her daughter saw Bysshe's letters, because Mr. Shelley sent them on to Whitton unopened. It was due to the lawyer that the matter rested where it was ; for he certainly displayed discretion in dealing with the letters. He did not return them to Mr. Shelley, but merely told him that they

<sup>1</sup> October 26, 1811.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Elizabeth Shelley died, unmarried, in 1832. Graham, who made no public mark as a musician, survived probably till the early fifties. Mr. W. M. Rossetti, who remembered meeting him in his boyhood, contributed some interesting reminiscences of this early friend of Shelley to the present writer's edition of *Shelley's Letters*.

## Shelley in England

contained "matter of reflection on Mrs. Shelley and admonition to Miss Shelley too trifling and absurd to be repeated." He then informed Bysshe that he had received the letters, unopened, for his perusal, and asked for leave to destroy them. This was not only well-meant advice, but Whitton's way of letting Bysshe know that no one save himself had read the letters.

The Duke of Norfolk, who had no doubt heard of Bysshe's marriage, had not forgotten his talks with him earlier in the year on the profession of politics. Mr. Shelley dined with the Duke at the Bailiff's feast on Oct. 22. No doubt he was glad of the opportunity of talking about his son to the Duke, who "asked very civilly about this unpleasant business." Mr. Shelley said that the matter was entirely in Whitton's hands, whereupon the Duke asked for his address in order to talk with him on the subject. Writing to Mr. Shelley on Oct. 24, Whitton said, "His Grace of Norfolk has just called." The subject of his conversation is given in Whitton's next letter to Bysshe.

*W. Whitton to P. B. Shelley*

10 GREAT JAMES ST.,  
Oct. 24, 1811.

SIR,—From the tendency and stile of your late communications to your father, he has resolved not again to open a letter from you, and I mention this to save the time which the passage to and from Horsham will occasion of any communication or letter you may

## The Elopement, and After

make or send. If, therefore, you shall think proper to address your father, and will send the paper to me, I will forward it to him, as I trust it will be conceived in terms that will justify my so doing. Your letter to your mother, which I opened and read this morning, is not proper, and I beg you will allow me to destroy it, as also that to your sister. You forget what is due from you, when you commit such harsh and unfeeling sentiments to writing.

His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, out of respect to your family, called on me just now to learn your address at York ; and I told his Grace you were in Town. He said he left Town to-morrow for 8 or 9 days, or that he would endeavour to see you. His Grace will not leave town until to-morrow 12, and perhaps you will take the opportunity of waiting on him in Saint James Square before that hour.—I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

WM. WHITTON.

[Addressed]

P. B. SHELLEY, Esq.,  
Turk's Head Coffee House,  
Strand.

Bysshe left London for York immediately after this letter reached the Turk's Head, as it was forwarded to him with the address added : " Mr. Stricklands, Blake Street, York." He read the letter with indignation, and wrote across the outside page, which bears Whitton's addressing, the following angry note :

*P. B. Shelley to W. Whitton*

" William Whitton's letter is conceived in terms which justify Mr. P. Shelley's returning it for his cool

## Shelley in England

reperusal. Mr. S. commends Mr. W. when he deals with gentlemen (which opportunity perhaps may not often occur) to refrain from opening private letters, or impudence may draw down chastisement upon contemptibility.

“York,” &c.

Bysshe then despatched the letter with this re-direction :

“MR. W. WHITTON,  
10 Gt. James Street,  
Bedford Row, London.”

The postmark is dated *Nov. 1, 1811.*

Referring to this matter, as a topic of local interest, in a letter <sup>1</sup> to his kinsman, the elder Medwin, who lived at Horsham, Bysshe said : “Whitton has written to me to state the impropriety of my letters to my mother and sisters ; this letter I have returned with a passing remark on the back of it. I find that affair on which those letters spoke is become the general gossip of the idle newsmongers of Horsham. They give *me* the credit of having invented it. They do my imagination much honour, but greatly discredit their own penetration.”

Whitton also commented on Shelley's note, in writing to Sir Bysshe on November 2, the day following its receipt : “I have had from P. B. Shelley the most scurrilous letter that a mad viper could dictate.”

<sup>1</sup> November 26, 1811.

## The Elopement, and After

The amenities of correspondence being in abeyance, the writers of these letters were not sparing in invective. In his letters to Whitton Mr. Shelley's language was unrestrained, and he showed himself to be thoroughly frightened. Writing on October 25 he informed Whitton that he had advised Mr. Hogg, senior, to delegate the business of dealing with his son to "some experienced gentleman," as he had done in the case of Bysshe.

"From the present perturbed state of P. B.'s mind, which will not suffer it to rest until it has completely and entirely disordered his whole spiritual past, I will not open a letter from him, and be cautious how I open any in other handwriting for fear he should endeavour to deceive.

"I shall most decidedly keep my resolution with him, and had he stay'd in Sussex I would have sworn in Especial Constables around me. He frightened his mother and sister exceedingly, and now if they hear a Dog Bark they run up stairs. He has nothing to say but the £200 a year.

"He has withdrawn himself from me and my Protection. He forgets his own promise, that he was not to be Idle, but place himself in some Gentlemanly situation long before this. He always varied, and now for the first time he is placed in a situation that he must be humbl'd, for I never before oppos'd or closely pursued him.

"The Duke of Norfolk is most kind towards me upon all occasions. But this young man must manifest

## Shelley in England

to the world his abhorrence of such monstrous opinions as he has sent forth, and also demonstrate by Acts of respect, Duty, and contrite Heart, before I can receive him upon his knees. No doubt his letters were of the most mischievous kind. He would not regard any language against his mother or sister. He accuses me of Libel and the thought of everything that could be bad, nor would he stick at any infamous language in his writing.

“Pray, my dear Sir, don’t spare him in his absurdities, for I shall submit to your judgment, and I hope assisted by His Grace the Duke of Norfolk’s Influence on P. B.’s mind. . . .

“*N.B.*—I can only guess at the seven deadly sins. He is capable of any mischief, particularly in the Family. He has no regard to character himself. Father, Mother, Sisters and Brother all alike.”

On October 27 Mr. Shelley again wrote to Whitton :

. . . “The Duke of Norfolk felt much and wished something might be settled, but His Grace, said Mr. S., you cannot do it. I told His Grace that I had left it to you, and depended on you in every respect. P. B. forgets that I consider you an experienc’d Friend, and lucky for him to have the advice of such a Gentleman. I only wish it had to operate on an Ingenuous Heart and a Sound understanding, but he is such a Pupil of Godwin that I can scarcely hope he will be persuaded that he owes any sort of obedience or compliance to the wishes or directions of his Parents.

## The Elopement, and After

He will contest every point, for youth is not the Season for admissions.

“Had Captn. Pilfold informed me when P. B. came to him, or advis’d him differently, and not taken him into his House in his Disobedience, I should have been better satisfied. I hear he was in London with him. P. B. told his mother that he did not come from York on his own business but to inform her what was said of her. Too absurd and ridiculous for a thought. I wish he may continue 100 miles off and not come near me, and I wish he may not work his disorder’d mind up to such a Pitch as to do mischief to himself or some others.

“I have been led on to write more than I had intended, for I am best satisfied when out of sight and out of mind. . . . I will not trouble you unnecessarily because I know you will manage best. We are all well, but often in sad frights with the Ladies’ fancies.”

## CHAPTER XIII

### MARRIED LIFE

Bysshe's return to York—Hogg's treachery—The arrival of Eliza Westbrook—Bysshe moves to Keswick—Correspondence with Hogg—Miss Hitchener the consoler—Robert Southey—Bysshe and his landlord—The Duke of Norfolk—A visit to Greystoke—Correspondence with Mr. Shelley—Mr. Westbrook's allowance—Hellen Shelley—William Godwin—The Irish expedition—The Shelleys at Nantgwillt—Scandal at Cuckfield—Bysshe and his grandfather—*Letter to Lord Ellenborough*—Lynmouth—Miss Hitchener—Tanyrallt—Shelley arrested.

BYSSHE returned to York by October 26; for on that date he wrote to Mr. Shelley, who had told him to discuss any questions respecting his allowance with Whitton. The lawyer's cautious method of doing business and his letters of remonstrance had so greatly irritated Bysshe that he was prompted to protest to his father at the manner in which he was being treated. Bysshe had been requested by Whitton to address to his care any letters that he might write to Mr. Shelley, and not to send them direct. But he ignored this request, and wrote to Field Place; while Hogg addressed and sealed the letter with his coat of arms—displaying three boars' heads coupé, with an oak tree on a wreath as a crest.

## Married Life

Mr. Shelley was not deceived by the direction, and sent the letter to Whitton on October 29. "The enclosed is from York," he said—"Hogg's direction and seal." He then, as usual, commented on Bysshe's behaviour, especially in not availing himself of Whitton's "good intentions," and remarked that "when he can submit to filial duty, and obedience to his Parents, and gentlemanly conduct and behaviour towards you, who so kindly undertake this *Unique* [? business] on my account, He will then experience Parental fondness on our parts, and a suitable return on yours." Mr. Shelley was relieved that Bysshe had left London, and he had no wish to see him, for he said, "York for ever! I hope he will remain there untill a thorough amendment takes place." He concluded with the following unexpected reference to Sir Bysshe's geniality: "My father was extremely pleasant at the signing the Codicils. Mr. Stedman [a Horsham solicitor] told him any pen would do. 'Oh! ho!' and with great gravity produced Mrs. Clarke's leg that is sold in Ivory as a Toy at Worthing."

*P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

[*Postmark, YORK,*  
*Oct. 26, 1811.*]

SIR,—When I last saw you I was referred by you to Mr. Whitton for the payment of the quarterly

## Shelley in England

allowance on which I was desired by you to rely. Mr. W.'s answer to my note was in the most vague stile of complaint concerning the letters which I had written to you. . . I do not see how personal feelings, even if unjustly wounded, can be an excuse to a man's own conscience for the violation of an unequivocal promise. . . But have they been *unjustly* wounded? Are the remarks to which I conjecture Mr. W.'s letters to allude *true* or *false*. . . Did you, or did you not falsely speak of my friend to Mr. J. Hogg, and as falsely assert that Stockdale the bookseller was the author of these misrepresentations?

Did Graham, the music-master, or did he not ward off a threatned action for *libel*? Have you or have you not written to Mr. Hogg of Stockton letters calculated, and intended to lower my character in their opinion, opposing as in contrast your own excellencies? I am compelled to recur to these things in consequence of your Attorney's letter, and your unjust anger.—I am, yours, &c.,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed]:

TIMOTHY SHELLEY, Esq.,  
Field Place,  
Horsham,  
M.P. Sussex.

Mr. Whitton, however, on reading this letter regarded it as an "improper writing for Mr. Shelley's perusal"; he told Bysshe so in a note, and for that reason he did not intend to forward it. The lawyer remonstrated with Bysshe for his "sentiments of anger" in his endeavour to serve him, and said that

## Married Life

“ the boyish warmth of Mr. P. B. Shelley is inexcusable, and W. will consider that the flippancy and impertinent observations made by Mr. P. B. Shelley are attributable to an irritable and uninformed mind.” Mr. Whitton, like many others, experienced a difficulty in maintaining his dignity in a third person letter ; he wrote in anger, and he probably meant to describe Bysshe’s mind as “ uninformed.”

On Bysshe’s arrival at York he found that Harriet was not alone, but that her sister, Eliza Westbrook, was keeping her company. The reasons given for her appearance were such as to cause him great distress, for they were none other than the result of treachery on the part of his friend Hogg. It appears that when he was at Edinburgh, attracted by Harriet’s girlish charms, Hogg had fallen deeply in love with her. He did not, however, declare his passion until they went to York, when Harriet forbade him to mention the subject again, and hoping she might hear no more of it, she forbore to tell her husband. Then Bysshe went to Sussex and left Harriet in the care of his friend, who not only again avowed his love but pestered her “ with arguments of detestable sophistry.” Poor Harriet withstood these entreaties, and, when Hogg, now contrite, wanted to write to Bysshe and tell him the whole story, she refused to allow him, as she feared the consequences of the revelation on her

## Shelley in England

husband's mind at such a distance. Harriet, however, took immediate steps to protect herself from any further annoyance from Hogg, and sent for her sister Eliza, who probably arrived at York shortly before Bysshe.

In his letters to Miss Hitchener Bysshe relates these incidents, and describes his interview with Hogg after learning the truth from Harriet. Bysshe said that he sought Hogg, and they walked to the fields beyond York. He desired to know fully the account of this affair. "I heard it from him," he said, "and I believe he was sincere." . . . "Our conversation was long. He was silent, pale, overwhelmed; the suddenness of the disclosure, and, oh! I hope its heinousness, had affected him. I told him that I pardoned him—freely, fully, completely pardoned, that not the least anger against him possessed me. His vices and not himself were the objects of my horror and my hatred. I told him I yet ardently panted for his *real* welfare; but that ill-success in crime and misery appeared to me an earnest of its opposite in benevolence."

Hogg pleaded for forgiveness, and Bysshe, with singular generosity, pardoned him. He also begged for Harriet's forgiveness, and declared that if he did not obtain it he would blow his brains out at her feet. Bysshe really believed in the sincerity of the penitent,

## Married Life

but he realised that he and Harriet could not possibly continue to live in the same house with him. Bysshe therefore decided to leave York immediately; he was very miserable, and so long as he got away from that town he was indifferent where he went. Harriet and her sister knew and liked Keswick, which perhaps had some attraction for Bysshe, as Southey was living hard by at Greta Hall. So to Keswick they decided to go—Bysshe, Harriet, and Eliza; they made their preparations swiftly, and, although Hogg was aware they were leaving, they departed without taking farewell of him. Wending their way across Yorkshire, they halted at Richmond, and then continued on their course to Keswick, where they arrived in the first week of November.

Bysshe wrote many letters from Keswick to Hogg, who printed some of them in his *Life of Shelley*, but apparently in a much altered form, so as to disguise any references to the painful episode with which they were principally concerned. In reading between the lines of these letters, with the assistance of Bysshe's correspondence with Miss Hitchener, one gathers that Hogg began by expressing full contrition for his conduct. Bysshe, who at first believed that he was really penitent, told Hogg how deep his affection had been for him, and how he had once fondly hoped they would never be separated. As time went on,

## Shelley in England

the tone of Hogg's letters deteriorated, and he now expressed a desire that he might live again with Harriet and Bysshe, who firmly put this suggestion aside, having detected in his sophistry "deep cunning."

When this device failed, Hogg taunted Bysshe with his "*consistency* in despising religion, despising duelling, and despising real friendship," with some hints as to duelling to induce him to fight it out in this manner. Bysshe replied that he would not fight a duel with him, that he had no right to expose his own life or take Hogg's. He confessed he wished, from various motives, to prolong his existence, nor did he think that Hogg's life was a fair exchange for his, as he had always acted up to his principles, which was not the case with Hogg.

Miss Hitchener proved to Bysshe a consolation, and his correspondence with her supplied him with an outlet for his pent-up feelings. "Your letters," he said, "are like angels sent from heaven on missions of peace." He spoke of her as the sister of his soul (as Hogg had once been his spiritual brother), and begged her to visit them. When Miss Hitchener demurred, he wrote, "Harriet has laughed at your suppositions. She invites you to our habitation wherever we are; she does this sincerely, and bids me to send her love to you. Eliza, her sister, is with us. She is, I think, a woman rather superior to the

## Married Life

generality. She is prejudiced ; but her prejudices I do not consider unvanquishable. Indeed, I have already conquered some of them."

Hogg had conceived a dislike for Eliza Westbrook, which was natural, considering the reason for her appearance at York, and she probably reciprocated the dislike. He did what he could to tarnish the glory with which Harriet invested her sister. We are told by this amusing chronicler that Eliza was old enough<sup>1</sup> to be the mother of Harriet, who sometimes addressed her as "Mamma," and that she "was as dignified as satin or silk could make her." Harriet had described her as exquisitely beautiful, and perhaps thought her so, for Eliza had cared for and tended her from childhood. Hogg was therefore bitterly disappointed to find that Eliza's face was much marked with the scars of smallpox and deadly white, not unlike "a mass of boiled rice, boiled in dirty water ; the eyes dark but dull, and without meaning ; the hair black and glossy, but coarse, and there was an admired crop, much like the tail of a horse—a switch tail. The fine figure was meagre, prim, and constrained."

Eliza was fond of managing, and soon fell into the

<sup>1</sup> The register of baptisms of St. George's, Hanover Square, reveals that Eliza Westbrook was born on June 4, 1782, consequently she was thirteen years older than Harriet, who was born on August 1, 1795. The Westbrooks had two other children ; Robert, born September 5, 1784, and Mary Ann, born April 31, 1781.

## Shelley in England

habit of looking after Harriet and her husband. She also looked after their resources, and kept the money in the corner of an old stocking. Harriet was happy, and Bysshe was tolerant of his sister-in-law, with her prim ways and everlasting admonitions, whose favourite remark, when Harriet did anything out of the ordinary, was, "Gracious Heaven! What would Miss Warne say?" Even the omniscient Hogg has failed to enlighten us about Eliza's friend, whose opinions she speculated upon with so much curiosity.

During their first days at the lakes they found lodgings at Townhead, Keswick, but by November 12 they had moved outside the town to Chestnut Cottage. Shelley described the scenery as "awfully beautiful. Our window commands a view of two lakes, and the giant mountains which confine them. But the object most interesting to my feelings is Southey's habitation. He is now on a journey; when he returns, I shall call on him."<sup>1</sup> Bysshe looked forward to meeting the author of *Kehama* with his accustomed enthusiasm, and he tells Miss Hitchener in another letter that he had been contemplating the outside of Greta Hall. When, however, in the course of time he found himself face to face with Southey he was obliged to admit disappointment. The older man was middle-aged, with settled opinions, and given to

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Miss Hitchener, November 14, 1811.

## Married Life

offering counsel. "I am not sure," he wrote to Miss Hitchener,<sup>1</sup> "that Southey is *quite* uninfluenced by venality. He is disinterested, so far as respects his family ; but I question if he is so, as far as respects the world. His writings solely support a numerous family. His sweet children are such amiable creatures that I almost forgive what I suspect." Bysshe found Mrs. Southey very stupid, but he enjoyed her home-made tea-cakes. He also met other members of Southey's hospitable household : his two sisters-in law, Mrs. Coleridge, whom he thought even worse than Mrs. Southey, and Mrs. Lovell, formerly an actress (whom he liked), the widow of Robert Lovell, the young poet-friend of Coleridge and Southey in their early Bristol days. Bysshe encountered no other local literary celebrities, neither De Quincey nor bluff "Christopher North," and his desire to meet the other lake poets, Coleridge and Wordsworth, was not fulfilled.

The young couple in engaging the furnished rooms at Chestnut Cottage had not thought of including the garden in their arrangements. When a member of the Southey household asked Harriet if it was let with their apartments, she replied, "Oh, no, the garden is not ours ; but then, you know, the people let us run about in it, whenever Percy and I are tired of sitting in the house."

<sup>1</sup> On January 2, 1812.

## Shelley in England

Bysshe and Harriet were, as this story suggests, in some respects still rather like a couple of overgrown children. He complained rather indignantly of his treatment by Mr. Dare, the landlord of Chestnut Cottage, and remarked, "Strange prejudices have these country people." Mr. Dare told Bysshe that he was not satisfied with him, because the country were gossiping very strangely of his proceedings. The explanation was that Bysshe had been talking one evening to Harriet and Eliza about the nature of the atmosphere, and the young chemist made some experiments with hydrogen gas, the flame of which was vivid enough to be observed at some distance. Mr. Dare was unconvinced, and said, "I am very ill satisfied with this. Sir, I don't like to talk of it. I wish you to provide yourself elsewhere." Bysshe added that he had with much difficulty quieted his landlord's fears. "He does not, however, much like us, and I am by no means certain that he will permit us to remain."

Remembering the Duke of Norfolk's friendly interposition in the spring, when he tried to get Bysshe to take up politics, he wrote before he left York to the Duke to ask him to intercede on his behalf with Mr. Shelley in regard to his marriage and his allowance. He also put in a word on behalf of Medwin, from whom he had borrowed a sum of money to

## Married Life

enable him to carry off Harriet to Edinburgh. He had heard that the Horsham lawyer had had a *rencontre* with Mr. Shelley, who disbelieved that he was ignorant of the purpose for which Bysshe had borrowed the money. The Duke good-naturedly wrote to Mr. Shelley some days later, as he noted in his diary, that he would go to Field Place "to confer with him on the unhappy difference with his son, from whom I have a letter before me." He also wrote to Bysshe to say that he would "be glad to interfere but with little hope of success, fearing that his father, and not he alone, will see his late conduct in a different point of view from what he sees it." The Duke fulfilled his promise and dined with Mr. Shelley at Horsham on November 10, having previously written a letter, "cordially worded," inviting Bysshe, Harriet, and Eliza Westbrook to visit him at Greystoke, his place in Cumberland, where they went on December 1 for a few days. It was a kindly act of the Duke to receive Bysshe and his wife, especially as it served to break the ice with Mr. Shelley, if it did not lead to a reconciliation with him.

The Duke showed much friendliness to his guests, was "quite charmed" with Eliza Westbrook, and invited several people to meet them, including William Calvert of Greta Bank, the son of one of his former stewards, and brother of Raisley Calvert, Words-

## Shelley in England

worth's generous benefactor. Shelley, who took to Calvert, wrote of him as "an elderly man who seemed to know all my concerns; and the expression of his face, whenever I held the arguments, which I do *everywhere*, was such as I shall not readily forget. I shall have more to tell of him, for we have met him before in these mountains, and his particular look then struck Harriet." Before he left the Lake District, Bysshe received much kindness from Mr. Calvert, with whom he was soon on terms of friendly intimacy.

Bysshe's finances were now in a bad state, and he was forced to think of ways and means. Mr. Westbrook had sent a small sum of money to his daughter, but with an intimation that no more was to be expected from him, and it was almost with Bysshe's last guinea that they were able to visit the Duke. So Bysshe wrote to Mr. Medwin for advice with regard to raising some money on his expectations, and asked for the loan of a small sum to meet his immediate expenses. He said, "We are now so poor as to be actually in danger of being deprived of the necessities of life." Medwin's reply to these inquiries was very likely unsatisfactory; the result of the visit to Grey-stoke was more promising. The Duke wrote to Mr. Shelley himself, and advised Bysshe also to write to his father and ask for pardon. The two following

## Married Life

letters to Timothy Shelley were printed by Professor Dowden in his *Life of Shelley*,<sup>1</sup> but as they form a link in Bysshe's correspondence with his father at this time, no excuse is made for reprinting them.

### *P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

KESWICK, CUMBERLAND,  
Dec. 13, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have lately returned from Grey-stoke, where I had been invited by the Duke of Norfolk that he might speak with me of the unhappy differences which some of my actions have occasioned. The result of his advice was that I should write a letter to you, the tone of whose expression should be sorrow that I should have wounded the feelings of persons so nearly connected with me. Undoubtedly I should thus express the real sense of my mind, for when convinced of my error no one is more ready to own that conviction than myself, nor to repair any injuries which might have resulted from a line of conduct which I had pursued.

On my expulsion from Oxford you were so good as to allow me £200 per annum; you also added a promise of my being unrestrained in the exercise of the completest free agency.

In consequence of this last I married a young lady whose personal character is unimpeachable. This action (admitting it to be done) in its very nature required dissimulation, much as I may regret that

<sup>1</sup> These letters were reprinted, with a hitherto unpublished passage restored to that of December 23, 1812, in the collected edition of *Shelley's Letters*, 1909.

## Shelley in England

I had condescended to employ it. My allowance was then withdrawn; I was left without money four hundred miles from one being I knew, every day liable to be exposed to the severest exile of penury. Surely something is to be allowed for human feelings, when you reflect that the letters you then received were written in this state of helplessness and dereliction. And now let me say that a reconciliation with you is a thing which I very much desire. Accept my apologies for the uncasiness which I have occasioned; believe that my wish to repair any uneasiness is firm and sincere.

I regard these family differences as a very great evil, and I much lament that I should in any wise have been instrumental in exciting them.

I hope you will not consider what I am about to say an insulting want of respect or contempt, but I think it my duty to say that, however great advantages might result from such concessions, I can make no promise of concealing my opinions in political or religious matters—I should consider myself culpable to excite any expectation in your mind which I should be unable to fulfil. What I have said is actuated by the sincerest wish of being again upon those terms with you which existed some time since. I have not employed hypocrisy to heighten the regret which I feel for having occasioned uneasiness. I have not employed meanness to concede what I consider it my duty to withhold. Such methods as these would be unworthy of us both. I hope you will consider what I have said, and I remain, dear Father, with sincerest wishes for our perfect right understanding, yours respectfully and affectionately,

P. B. SHELLEY.

# Married Life

*Timothy Shelley to P. B. Shelley*

FIELD PLACE,  
Dec. 19, 1811.

DEAR BYSSHE,—I am glad the visit to Greystoke Castle and the Society of that Nobleman, from whom I have experienc'd the kindest Friendship, has had the effect on your mind, to be convinc'd of the errors you have fallen into towards your Parents.

You withdrew yourself from my Protection, after having promis'd to enter into some Professional line which you then deem'd the choice of free agency upon an allowance of £200 pr. ann.

I hope and trust everything will in due time and proper Probation be brought to an excellent work.

I never can admit within my Family of the Principles that caus'd your expulsion from Oxford.—I remain, &c.,  
T. S.

*P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

KESWICK (CUMBERLAND),  
Dec. 23, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter which arrived last night gave me much pleasure. I hasten to acknowledge it, and to express my satisfaction that you should no longer regard me in an unfavourable light.

Mr. Westbrook at present allows for his daughter's subsistence £200 per annum, which prevents any situations occurring with similar unpleasantness as that at Edinburgh.

My principles still remain the same as those which caused my expulsion from Oxford. When questions which regard the subject are agitated in society, I

## Shelley in England

explain my opinions with coolness and moderation. You will not, I hope, object to my train of thinking. I could disguise it, but this would be falsehood and hypocrisy.

Believe that what I have said is dictated by the sincerest sentiments of respect.

I hope I shall sometimes have the pleasure of hearing from you, and that my mother and sisters are well. Mr. Whitton opened a letter addressed to the former. I know not what may be the precise state of that affair which is there alluded to, but I cannot consider myself blameable for having interfered.

I beg my love to my mother and sisters, and remain, with sentiments of respect, your affectionate son,

P. B. SHELLEY.

One may be sure that Mr. Westbrook's allowance of £200 a year was a godsend to the tenants of Chestnut Cottage, especially as it paved the way to a similar allowance from Mr. Shelley. But, notwithstanding Bysshe's straitened means, he was firm in his convictions as to the iniquity of entails. He had heard from Captain Pilfold, so he wrote to Miss Hitchener on December 15, of a "meditated proposal," on the part of his father and grandfather, to make his income immediately larger than Mr. Shelley's, on condition that he consented to entail the estate on his eldest son, and in default of male issue on his brother.<sup>1</sup> "Silly

<sup>1</sup> No evidence to support this statement has been discovered in the Shelley-Whitton papers.

## Married Life

dotards ! ” he exclaimed ; “ do they think I can be thus bribed and ground into an act of such contemptible injustice and inutility, that I will forswear my principles in consideration of £2000 a year, that the goodwill I could thus purchase, or the ill-will I could thus overbear, would recompense me for the loss of self-esteem, of conscious rectitude ? And with what face can they make to me a proposal so insultingly hateful. Dare *one* of them propose such a condition to my face—to the face of any virtuous man—and not sink into nothing at his disdain ? That I should entail £120,000 of command over labour, of power to remit this, to employ it for beneficent purposes, on one whom I know not—who might, instead of being the benefactor of mankind, be its bane, or use this for the worst purposes, which the real delegate of my chance-given property might convert into a most useful instrument of benevolence ! No ! this *you* will not suspect me of. What I have told you will serve to put in its genuine light the grandeur of aristocratical distinctions, and to show that contemptible vanity will gratify its *unnatural* passion at the expense of every just, humane, and philanthropic consideration :

“ Tho’ to a radiant angel linked,  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,  
And prey on garbage.”

Bysshe’s expressed desire for a reconciliation with

## Shelley in England

his father was no doubt prompted to a great extent by his longing to see his sisters. It must have been a great blow to him when he was given to understand by his father's last letter that, so long as he entertained opinions such as had caused his expulsion from Oxford, he could not expect to be received under the paternal roof. Any hope, therefore, of seeing his sisters had vanished, for a time at least. What Bysshe wanted to know was whether they still cared for him, or whether they had all been influenced to consider him as bad as he appeared in his father's eyes. He had no hopes of Elizabeth, who had ceased to be one of the faithful, and he had realised now for some time that she had gone over to the enemy's side. But his little sister Hellen was otherwise; she who had befriended her schoolfellow, Harriet Westbrook, when none of the other girls at the school would speak to her, she, he thought, might be counted on to send some proof of affection for her outcast brother. Bysshe therefore wrote to Hellen, and, bearing in mind his father's vigilance in intercepting letters, he enclosed it in a note to his grandfather's huntsman, Allen Etheridge, who lived at Horsham; consequently his correspondence would not, as he thought, be liable to his father's inspection.

# Married Life

*P. B. Shelley to Allen Etheridge*

CHESTNUT COTTAGE, KESWICK,  
[*Postmark* : KESWICK,  
*Dec.* 16, 1811].

DEAR ALLEN,—As I think my Sisters are now at Field Place, I have enclosed you this letter. Put it into the Summer House at Field Place when no one sees you ; and *when* you have put it there, contrive to let *Hellen* know that there is a letter for her there : contrive to let Hellen know, without letting anyone else know. This you had better manage by letting one of your little boys watch when she is alone, and tell her. But use your own discretion if you do not think this the best way. Remember, Allen, that I shall *not* forget you. How is your family going on ? I hope they enjoy better health.—Yours, &c.

P. B. SHELLEY.

*In the fold of the letter is written :*

Do not let yourself be seen in it.

[Addressed in a disguised handwriting] :

Mr. ALLEN ETHERIDGE,  
Huntsman to Sir B. Shelly, [sic]  
Horsham,  
Sussex.

*P. B. Shelley to Hellen Shelley*

[*Dec.* 16, 1811.]  
SUMMER HOUSE—EVENING.

MY DEAR HELLEN,—“Shew this letter to no one.” You remember that you once told me that you loved me. . . If you really love me, shew this letter to *no*

## Shelley in England

*one*, but answer it as you can. Remember this is the only proof I can now have that you *do* love me.

We are now at a great distance from each other, or at least we shall be: but that is no reason that I should forget that I am your brother, or you should forget that you are my sister. Everybody near you says that I have behaved very ill, and that I can love no one.

But how do you know that everything that is told you is true? A great many people tell a great many lies, and believe them, but that is no reason that you are to believe them. Because everybody else hates me, that is no reason that you should. Think for yourself, my dear girl, and write to me to tell me what you think. Where you are now, you cannot do as you please—you are obliged to submit to other people. They will not let you walk and read and think (if they knew your thoughts) just as you like, though you have as good a right to do it as they. But if you were with me, you would be with someone who loved you; you might run and skip, read, write, think just as you liked. Then, though you cannot now be with me, you can write, you can tell me what you think, and how you get on, on paper. Perhaps you cannot get a pen and ink, but you can get pencil, and this will do; and as nobody can suspect you, you may easily write, and put your letter into the Summer House, where I shall be sure to get it. I watch over you, though you do not think I am near.

I need not tell you how I love you. I know all that is said of me, but do not you believe it. You will perhaps think *I'm* the Devil, but, no, I am only your brother, who is obliged to be put to these shifts to get a letter from you.

## Married Life

How do you get on with your poetry, and what books do you read, for you know how anxious I am that you should improve in every way, though I don't think music or dancing of much consequence? *Thinking*, and thinking without letting anything but *reason* influence your mind, is the great thing. Some people would tell you that it would be wrong to write to me; but how do you know it is? They do not tell you *why* it is wrong. They would scold you for it, but this would not make it wrong. Let no one find out that I have written to you. Read this letter when no one sees you, and with attention. I have not written to Mary, because I know that she is not firm and determined like you; but if you think that she would not tell, give my love to her, and tell her to write to me.

I shall not say any more now. Write, and leave your letter in the Summer House. I shall be sure to get it if you go there alone and leave it.—Your very affectionate and true brother,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Endorsed in disguised handwriting]:

(Open this when *alone*),

Miss *HELLEN* SHELLEY.

[Further endorsement in Sir Timothy's handwriting:]

In Dec., 1811, enclosed.

This pathetic appeal shared the fate of Bysshe's other letters to his family. Etheridge apparently took both of these epistles, dutiful servant that he was, to Mr. Shelley, who promptly sent them to his faithful Whitton.

## Shelley in England

Bysshe in the meantime remained at Keswick, but by the middle of December he was contemplating a visit from Miss Hitchener (which did not take place), and after it he was thinking of going to Ireland.

The year 1811, a fateful one in Bysshe's life, came to a close without any other noteworthy events. But in the early days of 1812, on January 3, he addressed his first letter to William Godwin, and, compared with this, no act in Shelley's career was more portentous. Shelley was not twenty, Godwin was nearly fifty-six, when this correspondence began. The younger man wrote without any introduction, having but recently learned that Godwin was still living. He approached him much as a neophyte might approach his favourite saint, whom he had found to be living after having venerated him as one of the dead. "The name of Godwin," he said, "has been used to excite in me feelings of reverence and admiration. I have been accustomed to consider him a luminary too dazzling for the darkness which surrounds him. From the earliest period of my knowledge of his principles, I have ardently desired to share, on the footing of intimacy, that intellect which I have delighted to contemplate in its emanations. Considering, then, these feelings, you will not be surprised at the inconceivable emotions with

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which I learned your existence and your dwelling. I had enrolled your name in the list of the honourable dead. I had felt regret that the glory of your being had passed from this earth of ours. It is not so; you still live, and, I firmly believe, are still planning the welfare of human kind." Bysshe went on to tell Godwin that his "course had been short, but eventful"—which was certainly true—that he was young and ardent in the cause of philanthropy and truth. In short, he begged the philosopher to answer his letter and to think him not unworthy of his friendship, or, in other words, to allow him to sit at his feet.

Godwin's reply was not discouraging, but he complained of the generalising character of Shelley's letter. So Shelley wrote again at length on January 10, and gave some particulars of his life, his attempts at authorship, his opinions, and his expulsion from Oxford. Some references to his father are interesting, as showing how he viewed him at this time. "I am the son of a man of fortune in Sussex. The habits and thinking of my father and myself never coincided. Passive obedience was inculcated and enforced in my childhood. I was required to love, because it was *my duty* to love. It is scarcely necessary to remark that coercion obviated its own intention. . . . It will be necessary, in order to elucidate this part of my history, to inform you that I am heir by entail to an estate

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of £6000 per annum. My principles have induced me to regard the law of primogeniture an evil of primary magnitude. My father's notions of family honour are incoincident with my knowledge of public good. I will never sacrifice the latter to any consideration. My father has ever regarded me as a blot, a defilement of his honour. He wished to induce me, by poverty, to accept of some commission in a distant regiment, and in the interim of my absence to prosecute the pamphlet, that a process of outlawry might make the estate, on his death, devolve to my younger brother."

It is hard to believe or, indeed, explain the statement in this last sentence. Perhaps, when Mr. Shelley had failed to induce Bysshe, after he was expelled from Oxford, to engage in politics, he had expressed, in desperation, either to him or to someone else the wish that he should go into the army. Most likely it was no more than a fragment of wild talk on the part of Timothy Shelley that had been retailed to his son.<sup>1</sup> Godwin now expressed "a deep and earnest

<sup>1</sup> "You mistake me if you think that I am angry with my father. I have ever been desirous of a reconciliation with him, but the price which he demands for it is a renunciation of my opinions, or, at least, a subjection to conditions which should bind me to act in opposition to their very spirit. It is probable that my father has *acted* for my welfare, but the manner in which he has done so will not allow me to suppose that he has *felt* for it, unconnectedly, with certain considerations of birth; and feeling for these things was not feeling for me. I never loved my father—it was not from hardness of heart, for I have loved and do love warmly."—Shelley to Godwin, Keswick, January 16, 1812.

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interest in the welfare " of his young correspondent, whose letters to the philosopher continued at frequent intervals.

During the past few years Shelley had been an enthusiastic student of Godwin's great work, of the essays in *The Enquirer*, and of his novels. The earliest of these books had been published when Shelley was in his cradle ; the most recent were some years old. It was therefore not surprising that he had put Godwin down " in the list of the honourable dead."

It was more than fourteen years since William Godwin had lost his first wife, Mary Wollstonecraft, and eighteen years had elapsed since he had given to the world his *Enquiry concerning Political Justice and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, the book that had brought him fame, but no fortune. Godwin had for some years retired from the excitement of a publicist's career, had married a second time, and was living the life of a philosopher, in retreat at Skinner Street, Holborn Hill, where the Viaduct now stands. His energies were divided between writing novels and producing books for a small publishing business known as the " Juvenile Library," of which his wife, Mary Jane Godwin, was manager. Charles and Mary Lamb were Godwin's friends and the chief authors of the Juvenile Library, in which

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their *Tales from Shakespeare*, *Mrs. Leicester's School*, and Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses* had first been published. Hazlitt had written for the Library an English Grammar, and Godwin himself compiled, under the name of "William Baldwin, Esq.," a few educational books. The publications of the Juvenile Library sold well, and the business ought to have been successful; but Godwin and his wife were hopeless muddlers, and the enterprise only launched them heavily into debt.

The Godwin household was a strangely miscellaneous one. There was (1) Godwin, whose philosophical calm remained unruffled notwithstanding the steadily rising waters of a flood of debts; (2) Mrs. Godwin, a malevolent woman with a shrewish tongue, and the especial abomination of Charles Lamb, who has immortalised her green spectacles. Then there was (3) Mary, the daughter of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft; (4) Fanny Imlay (or Godwin, as she was called), the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and Imlay; Mrs. Godwin's two children by her first husband—(5) Clara Mary Jane, and (6) Charles Clairmont; and, lastly, William Godwin's son (7), William, by his second wife. It is not surprising that such a mixed family, confined to the narrow quarters over the shop in Skinner Street, found it at times difficult to live together in harmony. Things undoubtedly would have gone more

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smoothly but for the disturbing element of Mrs. Godwin.

During January Bysshe was preparing for his visit to Ireland, his object being, as he told Godwin, " principally to *forward* as much as we can the Catholic Emancipation "; he also intended to urge the necessity of repealing the Union. The last week at Keswick was spent under the roof of William Calvert, who, like Southey, did his best to dissuade Shelley from his proposed Irish campaign; but Mrs. Calvert favoured the idea, and was hearty in her wishes for the success of Shelley and his party. He was himself sure of success, and expressed perfect confidence in the impossibility of failure.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Shelley had now arranged for the resumption of his son's allowance, which, with a similar sum from Mr. Westbrook, was sufficient for Bysshe's needs. On receiving the sum of £100 from Whitton he was ready to start for Dublin, and, with Harriet and Eliza Westbrook, he probably left Keswick on Sunday, February 3, and embarked from Whitehaven for the Isle of Man. After being driven from thence by a storm to the north of Ireland, they reached Dublin on the night of February 13. Shelley had written while at Keswick *An Address to the Irish People*, which he printed soon after he arrived at Dublin,

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Miss Hitchener, January 26, 1812.

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and he fixed the price of the pamphlet at fivepence, "because," as he said in the advertisement, "it is the intention of the Author to awaken in the minds of the Irish poor a knowledge of their real state, summarily pointing out the evils of that state, and suggesting rational means of remedy—Catholic Emancipation and a Repeal of the Union Act (the latter, the most successful engine that England ever wielded over the misery of fallen Ireland) being treated of, in the following Address, as grievances which unanimity and resolution may remove, and associations, conducted with peaceable firmness, being earnestly recommended, as means for embodying that unanimity and firmness, which must finally be successful." As soon as it was printed, Bysshe threw copies of this pamphlet from the balcony of his lodgings in Lower Sackville Street. "I stand at the balcony of our window, and watch till I see a man *who looks likely*—I throw a book to him." Harriet wrote to Miss Hitchener: "I'm sure you would laugh were you to see us give the pamphlets. We throw them out of the window, and give them to men that we pass in the streets. For myself, I am ready to die of laughter when it is done, and Percy looks so grave; yesterday he put one into a woman's hood of a cloak. She knew nothing of it, and we passed her. I could hardly get on; my muscles were so irritated."

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Bysshe sent a copy of the *Address* to Godwin through the post as a newspaper, "to save expense," as he said. It was charged as a letter, and the recipient had to pay a fine of £1, 1s. 8d., which he did philosophically. Others who suffered by Shelley's mode of conveying the pamphlet were Mr. Westbrook and Miss Hitchener. Perhaps Mr. Shelley was also a victim, as there is a copy of the *Address* among the Shelley-Whitton papers, with corrections in the author's hand.

Shelley wrote and printed another pamphlet, in the midst of much other activity, while in Dublin, with the following comprehensive title, "Proposals for an Association of those Philanthropists who, convinced of the inadequacy of the moral and political state of Ireland to produce benefits which are nevertheless attainable, are willing to unite to accomplish its regeneration."

Among the Shelley-Whitton papers there is a copy of the *Dublin Weekly Messenger* for Saturday, March 7, 1812, with the following article, marked in red pencil, headed :

"*Pierce Byshe Shelly, Esq.* [sic]

"The highly interesting appearance of this young gentleman at the late Aggregate Meeting of the Catholics of Ireland has naturally excited a spirit of inquiry as to his objects and views in coming forward

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at *such* a meeting ; and the publications which he has circulated with such uncommon industry, through the Metropolis, has set curiosity on the wing to ascertain who he is, from whence he comes, and what his pretensions are to the confidence he solicits and the character he assumes. To those who have read the productions we have alluded to, we need bring forward no evidence of the cultivation of his mind, the benignity of his principles, or the peculiar fascination with which he seems able to recommend them.

“Of this gentleman’s family we can say but little, but we can set down what we have heard from respectable authority : that his father is a member of the Imperial Parliament, and that this young gentleman whom we have seen is the *immediate* heir of one of the *first* fortunes in England. Of his principles and his manners we can say more, because we can collect from conversation, as well as from reading, that he seems devoted to the propagation of those divine and Christian feelings which purify the human heart, give shelter to the poor and consolation to the unfortunate : that he is the *bold* and *intrepid* advocate of those principles which are calculated to give energy to truth, and to depose from their guilty eminence the bad and vicious passions of a corrupt community ; that a universality of charity is *his* object, and a perfectibility of human society *his* end, which cannot be attained by the *conflicting* dogmas of religious sects, *each* priding itself on the extinction of the *other*, and *all* existing by the mutual misfortunes which flow from polemical warfare. The principles of this young gentleman embrace *all* sects and all persuasions. His doctrines, *political* and *religious*,

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may be accommodated to *all*; every friend to true Christianity will be his religious friend, and every enemy to the liberties of Ireland will be his *political* enemy. The weapons he wields are those of reason and the most *social benevolence*. He deprecates violence in the accomplishment of his views, and relies upon the mild and merciful spirit of toleration for the completion of all his designs and the consummation of all his wishes. To the religious bigot such a *missionary of truth* is a formidable opponent; by the political monopolist he will be considered the child of Chimera, the creature of fancy, an imaginary legislator who presumes to make laws without reflecting upon his *materials*, and despises those considerations which have baffled the hopes of the most philanthropic and the efforts of the most wise. It is true, human nature may be too depraved for such a hand as Mr. Shelly's to form to anything that is good, or liberal, or beneficent. Let him but take down *one* of the rotten pillars by which society is *now* propped, and substitute the purity of his own principles, and Mr. Shelly shall have done a great and lasting service to human nature. To this gentleman Ireland is much indebted for selecting *her* as the theatre of his first attempts in this holy work of human regeneration. The Catholics in Ireland should listen to him with respect, because they will find that an enlightened Englishman has interposed between the treason of their own countrymen and the almost conquered spirit of their country; that Mr. Shelly has come to Ireland to demonstrate in his person that there are hearts in his own country not rendered callous by six hundred years of injustice; and that the genius of freedom, which has communicated comfort and

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content to the cottage of the Englishman, has found its way to the humble roof of the Irish peasant, and promises by its presence to dissipate the sorrows of past ages, to obliterate the remembrance of persecution, and close the long and wearisome scene of centuries of human depression. We extract from Mr. Shelly's last production, which he calls *Proposals for an Association, &c. &c.*"

After quoting some extracts from this pamphlet, the writer continues :

" We have but one more word to add. Mr. Shelly, commiserating the sufferings of our distinguished countryman, Mr. Finerty, whose exertions in the cause of political freedom he much admired, wrote a very beautiful poem, the profits of which, we understand from *undoubted* authority, Mr. Shelly remitted to Mr. Finerty ; we have heard they amounted to nearly a hundred pounds. This fact speaks a volume in favour of our new friend." <sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the reason for the copy of this paper being among Whitton's papers is that it may have been sent to Mr. Shelley by Bysshe. The proceedings of the meeting which took place on Friday, February 28, at the Fishamble Street Theatre were noticed in several Irish papers and in the London *Morning Chronicle*, which said the theatre " was brilliantly illuminated. . . . The boxes were filled with ladies,

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 150.

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full dressed, and the whole is represented as having a very imposing effect." The articles from the *Weekly Messenger*, and reports from other Dublin papers, are given in the late Mr. D. F. MacCarthy's work, *Shelley's Early Life*, which contains a full account of the Irish expedition.

Another reference to Shelley's doings in Ireland, preserved with the Shelley-Whitton papers, is the following cutting from a Lewes newspaper, on which Mr. Shelley wrote, "Lewes Paper, 1st June, 1812." Apparently it relates to the *Address to the Irish People*, and it was perhaps forwarded to the editor by Miss Hitchener, as Shelley wrote to her on March 10, "Send me the Sussex papers. Insert, or make them insert, the account of *me*. It may have a good effect on the minds of the people, as a preparation." Harriet adds in her contribution to the same letter, "Send us the paper in which you have inserted the *Address*."

The editor of the Lewes paper, however, did not take kindly to the suggestion, and declined to fill his columns with Shelley's pamphlet. He said:

"We have been favoured with the address of P. B. S., Esq., and entertain no doubt of his benevolent and humane intentions. Nevertheless, after due consideration, we are of opinion that any especial notice of the accompanying letter would have a tendency to defeat the ends he has in view, as a public exposure of the accused parties, however just, might

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irritate their minds and lead them to direct, with greater severity, the lash of tyranny and oppression against the object of his commiseration, who appears to be completely within their power."

Shelley was evidently anxious that his friends in Sussex should hear of his activities in Ireland. He wrote on March 20 to the elder Medwin: "As you will see by the Lewes paper, I am in the midst of overwhelming engagements." The news had already reached Field Place if he sent his father the copy of his pamphlet, and Whitton had probably received it when he wrote to Sir Bysshe on March 5: "I was much concerned to hear your account of Mr. Timothy Shelley [who was evidently ill]. His son is in Dublin, publishing some hints for bettering the state of the nation."

Shelley spent a part of his time in preparing a volume of poems for the press and in endeavouring to get them published, but the Dublin publisher to whom he applied held up the MS., and the book was never printed during the author's lifetime. Some seventy years later, Shelley's grandson, Mr. Charles Esdaile, who subsequently owned the MS., allowed Professor Dowden to print extracts from the poems in his *Life of Shelley*.

Shelley also managed to make some acquaintances during his sojourn in the Irish capital, one of whom

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was John Lawless, or "honest Jack Lawless," as he was called by his friends, who was perhaps responsible for the article on the young politician in the *Weekly Messenger*. Curran was another, and a greater, Irishman whom he met through the introduction of Godwin.

Godwin, indeed, who was never long out of Shelley's mind, was the recipient of many letters which kept him posted with intelligence concerning the progress of the campaign. Shelley, moreover, acquainted Godwin with his opinions generally, his views on life, and the doings of his domestic circle.

"You speak of my wife," he said; "she desires with me to you, and to all connected with you, her best regards. She is a woman whose pursuits, hopes, fears, and sorrows were so similar to my own that we married a few months ago. I hope in the course of this year to introduce her to you and yours, as I have introduced myself to you. It is only to those who have had some share in making me what I am that I can be thus free. Adieu! You will hear from me shortly. Give my love and respects to everyone with whom you are connected. I feel myself almost at your fireside. . . . I send the little book for which I was expelled. I have not changed my sentiments. I know that Milton believed Christianity, but I do not forget that Virgil believed ancient mythology."

Godwin told Shelley that he had read his letters

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("the first perhaps excepted") "with peculiar interest." As far as he had been able to penetrate his character, he conceived "it to exhibit an extraordinary assemblage of lovely qualities, not without considerable defects." The source of the defects, he thought, was that Shelley was very young, and that, in essential respects, he did not sufficiently perceive that he was so. Godwin expressed his disagreement with the principles set forth by Shelley in his pamphlets as strongly as he disapproved of his visit to Ireland, and he regretted that the effect of *Political Justice* on his young friend should have resulted in his campaign. He said, "Shelley, you are preparing a scene of blood! If your associations take effect to any extensive degree, tremendous consequences will follow, and hundreds, by their calamitous and premature fate, will expiate your error." Godwin continued, "I wish to my heart you would come immediately to London. I have a friend who has contrived a tube to convey passengers sixty miles an hour. Be youth your tube! I have a thousand things I could say orally, more than I can say in a letter on this important subject. Away! You cannot imagine how much all the females of my family, Mrs. G. and three daughters, are interested in your letters and history."

Shelley was either tired of his Irish expedition, or,

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as he told Godwin, he was ready to take the advice of his guide, philosopher, and friend—to whom he wrote on March 19 that he had already withdrawn the circulation of his publications wherein he had erred, and that he was preparing to quit Dublin.

The Shelleys left Dublin on April 4, and after a rough passage of thirty-six hours (instead of twelve, as they had expected) they reached Holyhead. On April 7 they began a journey across Wales in search of a house, and their wanderings led them to Nantgwilt, Rhayader, Radnorshire, in South Wales, a district already familiar to Shelley through his visit to his cousins, the Groves. The place that he settled in was a farm of about 200 acres, with a good house, at a yearly rent of £98, which he thought “abundantly cheap,” and so it may have been, had he intended to turn farmer and live up to the description which he had given himself when he was married at Edinburgh. The proprietor of the house was a bankrupt, and his assignees had offered the lease, stock, and furniture of the premises to Shelley, who was “anxious to purchase.” So anxious was he to take advantage of this offer that he wrote on April 25 to Medwin that the assignees were willing to give him credit for eighteen months or longer, as his being a minor his signature was invalid. “Would you object to join your name to my bond, or, rather, to pledge yourself

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for my standing by the agreement when I come of age? The sum is likely to be six or seven hundred pounds." The Horsham lawyer no doubt refused, as he had already made enough trouble for himself with Mr. Shelley by lending Bysshe money on the eve of his departure for Edinburgh. The day before writing this letter to Medwin he had sent the following to his father :

*P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

NANTGWILT, RHAYADER,  
RADNORSHIRE,  
April 24, 1812.

DEAR SIR,—The last of your communications through Mr. Whitton put a period to any immediate prospect of coming to those amicable terms on which I wish to stand with yourself and my family. It has at last occurred to me that the probable cause of the offence which you so suddenly took, was a clandestine attempt on my part to correspond with Hellen. You very well know that I could not correspond with any of my sisters openly, and that it is very natural for me to attempt to keep alive in one at least an affection when all the others are at variance with one. An additional motive was that my correspondence would have been such as is calculated to improve the understanding and expand the heart. I am now at Nantgwilt in Radnorshire, and being desirous to settle with my wife in a retired spot, think of taking this house and farm. The farm is about 200 acres, the house a very good one, the yearly rent £98.

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The furniture and the stock must, however, be purchased, which will cost £500. This sum, if I were to raise it, would not be obtained under exorbitant interest, and probably, at all events, with difficulty. If you would advance it to me, I should at once, by your means, be settled where my yearly income would *amply* suffice, which would otherwise be dissipated in searching for a situation where it might maintain myself and my wife. You have now an opportunity of settling the heir to your property where he may quietly and gentlemanly pursue those avocations which are calculated hereafter to render him no disgrace to your family on a more extended theatre of action.

If you feel inclined to assist me with the sum for the purposes I mention, and it is inconvenient to give any ready money, your name for the amount would suffice.

I am now at the house of Mr. Hooper (Nantgwilt), who has become bankrupt, and with whose assignees I am treating for the lease, furniture, &c. If you will accede to my request, or if you reject it, pray be so kind as to inform me as soon as you can make it convenient, as I am at present in a state of suspense which is far from pleasant.

Your daughter-in-law is confined by a tedious intermittent fever, which considerably augments the gloomy feelings incident to our unsettled state. I hope that all at Field Place are in good health.—Dear Sir, yours very respectfully,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed] :

T. SHELLEY, Esq., M.P.,  
Field Place,  
Horsham, Sussex.

[Readdressed] :

Miller's Hotel,  
Westminster Bridge.

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Mr. Shelley replied curtly to the letter through Whitton, on May 5, that he declined making the advance that Bysshe had mentioned, or to give any security.

In their letters to Elizabeth Hitchener she had received frequent appeals from Bysshe and Harriet to visit, or, indeed, to take up her residence with them. They asked her to come to Keswick, and when she was unable to accept their invitation, it was decided that on their return from Ireland she should pay her long-deferred visit in Wales. She still hesitated, because to be absent from her school for any length of time would necessitate closing it.

Miss Hitchener had evidently broached the subject to Mrs. Pilfold, and spoken in glowing terms of her ardent young correspondent. Mrs. Pilfold could make nothing of this platonic friendship, and chose to add a questionable colour to it. She was anxious not to lose her schoolmistress, and was determined to stop Miss Hitchener's visit to the Shelleys. Busybodies were soon active at Cuckfield, and Miss Hitchener was quick to communicate the scandal to Bysshe. He was depressed when these unwelcome tidings reached him, for Harriet was ill with a bilious fever, so he wrote to his friend: "A week ago I said, 'Give me Nantgwilt; fix me in this spot, so retired, so lovely, so fit for the seclusion of those who think

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and feel. Fate, I ask no more.' Little *then* did I expect my Harriet's illness, or that flaming opposition which the mischievous and credulous around you are preparing against the most cherished wishes of my heart. Now I say, 'Fate, give my Harriet health, give my *Portia* peace, and I will excuse the remainder of my requisition.' Oh, my beloved friend, let not the sweet cup be dashed from the lips of those who alone can appreciate the luxury, at the instant that Fate has yielded it to their power!"<sup>1</sup> He referred to the subject in his next letter to "Portia" (the name that Bysshe and Harriet had given to Eliza Hitchener): "And so our dear friends are *determined to destroy our peace of mind* if we live together—determined, all for our good, to make us *all* the most miserable wretches on earth. Now this, it must be confessed, is truly humane and condescending. But how is it to be managed? Where will they begin? In what manner will they destroy our peace of mind without eradicating that conscious integrity whence it springs?" Bysshe had written to the Captain and to Miss Hitchener's father to try and allay the scandal. The Captain's reply was that reports were current such as Miss Hitchener had described, but "he professed to disbelieve the 'Mistress' business, but asserted that I certainly was

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Miss Hitchener, May 1, 1812.

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very much attached to you. I certainly should feel quite as much inclined to deny my own existence as to deny this latter charge ; altho' I took care to assure him that, in the vague sense which he had annexed to the word '*love*,' he was utterly mistaken." <sup>1</sup>

The result of this gossip was to further postpone Portia's visit. For one thing, Shelley had not been successful in coming to any arrangement for the possession of Nantgwillt, as the possessor was not disposed to let him remain without security, which he was unable to obtain. He had decided to go for a short time to the Groves at Cwm Elan, but before he left Nantgwillt he wrote to his grandfather. He may have thought that if he could produce a letter from Sir Bysshe stating what he was prepared to do for him, that it might be accepted as a security by the possessor of the Nantgwillt property.

### *P. B. Shelley to Sir Bysshe Shelley*

NANTGWILT, RHAYADER,  
RADNORSHIRE, S.W.,  
*June 2, 1812.*

SIR,—I take the liberty of writing to you in consequence of a *hint* which I have recieved [*sic*], preferring in cases of importance to negotiate with principals.

I had heard that you designed, on my coming of age, to enter into some terms with me, respecting

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Miss Hitchener, May 7, 1812.

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money matters, which terms, if at all compatible with my own interest, believe me I shall be ready to accede to.

Altho' at present in circumstances that very much require assistance, I do not venture to ask for any remittance from you, knowing that all acts of a minor are void in law, but you would very much oblige me if you would state to me the nature of the terms about to be proposed on the expiration of my minority, to which I am not so adverse as I may have been represented.

I am now about to take the place whence I date this letter.—I remain, with much respect, your aff.  
Grandson,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed] :

Sir BYSSHE SHELLEY, Bt.,  
Horsham,  
Sussex.

After a short stay at Cwm Elan, the Shelleys moved to Lynmouth. While they were there, Bysshe issued from the office of a Barnstaple printer his "Letter to Lord Ellenborough, occasioned by the Sentence which he passed on Mr. D. I. Eaton, as Publisher of the Third Part of Paine's *Age of Reason*." In this little pamphlet Shelley first gave proof of his gifts as a writer of prose. It was, however, as short-lived as *The Necessity of Atheism*. The printer, on examining the contents of the pamphlet, destroyed most of the impression, and all save one<sup>1</sup> of seventy-five copies

<sup>1</sup> This unique copy is now in the Bodleian Library.

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which Shelley despatched to his friend Hookham, the Bond Street publisher, met a similar fate.

Shelley had caused to be printed, probably while he was in Dublin, a broadside which he described as a "Declaration of Rights," consisting of a number of sentences, drawn up in the form of appeals to the people similar to those placarded on the walls and houses of Paris during the French Revolution. His hurried departure from Ireland, and Godwin's grave warning, had probably decided him not to make use of this form of propaganda in Dublin. He was, however, unable to withstand the temptation of trying the effect of the broadsides on the people of Devon, and he engaged a man to fix them on the walls of Barnstaple. The man was arrested and sentenced to a fine of £200 or six months' imprisonment. Shelley, who was unable to meet the fine, promised to pay a sum of fifteen shillings a week in consideration of a mitigation of the sentence. This was one of the causes that brought Shelley's visit to Lynmouth to an end.

Miss Hitchener, who was no longer able to withstand Bysshe's insistent invitations, decided to visit her friends at Lynmouth. Accordingly she closed her school, started on her journey, and in passing through London supped and slept at the Godwins' house on

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July 14. It is possible that the pleasure anticipated by Shelley in having her under his roof was speedily abated, if it was ever realised. Harriet was evidently not much impressed with her guest when she wrote on August 4 to Catherine Nugent, an acquaintance whom she had made in Dublin : " Our friend, Miss Hitchener, is come to us. She is very busy writing for the good of mankind. She is very dark in complexion, with a great quantity of black hair. She talks a great deal. If you like great talkers, she will suit you. She is taller than me or my sister, and as thin as it is possible to be. I hope you will see her some day."

Very soon Harriet began to suspect that Portia was in love with Bysshe, who, so far from reciprocating these feelings, now doubted her republicanism and sincerity. It was a painful position for the poor woman ; her head had been turned by her young friend's passionate letters, and she was unable to live up to the ideal that he had created of her.

The Shelleys hastily left Lynmouth apparently towards the end of August, and, crossing the Bristol Channel, settled at length near Tremadoc in a house called Tanyrallt. Here Bysshe found a fresh field for his energies. His landlord, Mr. W. A. Maddocks, M.P., had reclaimed from the sea a large tract of marshland in Carnarvonshire, and had built upon it the new

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town of Tremadoc, which had been named after its enterprising founder. At the time of Shelley's visit to the town an embankment was in the course of construction to protect Tremadoc from danger of destruction by the sea. Shelley became keenly interested in the fate of the embankment, and besides canvassing the neighbourhood for subscriptions, he headed the list with a sum of £100, and went up to London with his wife, Eliza Westbrook, and Miss Hitchener to forward his object. Bysshe applied to the Duke of Norfolk for a contribution, but, according to Hogg, the Duke politely declined, excusing himself on the score of having no funds at his immediate disposal.<sup>1</sup>

Bysshe was now as anxious to arrange the departure of Miss Hitchener as he had been to welcome her under his roof. It was no easy task, but at last she was induced to leave on or before November 8, having received the promise of an allowance of £100

<sup>1</sup> Shelley was so embarrassed at this time for want of money that he appears to have been actually arrested for debt. The only available information on this subject is contained in a letter, dated June 12, 1844, from William Roberts, a surgeon of Carnarvon, to Peacock, Shelley's executor. Roberts stated that some thirty years previously Shelley was arrested at Carnarvon for a sum of money which he owed, and he would have been sent to gaol if Roberts had not bailed him for the amount. Roberts, who thus became acquainted with Shelley and visited him at Tremadoc, lent him £30, which sum he never paid, but he discharged the debt for which he was arrested. In another letter addressed to Sir Timothy Shelley on February 7, 1824, Roberts asked for the payment of a sum of £6, which he said was owing to him from Shelley.

## Married Life

a year. “ ‘ The Brown Demon,’ ” wrote Bysshe, on December 3, to Hogg (with whom he was now reconciled), “ as we now call our late tormentor and school-mistress, must receive her stipend. I pay it with a heavy heart and an unwilling hand ; but it must be so. She was deprived by our misjudging haste of a situation, where she was going on smoothly ; and now she says that her reputation is gone, her health ruined, her peace of mind destroyed by my barbarity—a complete victim to all the woes, mental and bodily, that heroine ever suffered ! This is not all fact ; but certainly she is embarrassed and poor, and we, being in some degree the cause, we ought to obviate it.” That he thought her “ artful, superficial, ugly,” and worse, was no excuse for Bysshe’s treatment of his former friend. He declared that his astonishment at his fatuity, inconsistency, and bad taste was never so great as after living four months with her as an inmate. “ What would Hell be,” he added, “ were such a woman in Heaven ? ”

## CHAPTER XIV

### PARTING FROM HARRIET

Shelley meets Mary Godwin—The assault at Tanyrallt—Ireland revisited—*Queen Mab*—The birth of Ianthe—London—Duke of Norfolk—The Godwins—J. F. Newton—Mrs. Boinville—Bracknell—Shelley revisits the Lakes and Edinburgh—T. L. Peacock—Elephantiasis—Money difficulties—Shelley's last visit to Field Place—Shelley remarried—Mary Godwin—Shelley takes leave of Harriet.

WHILE Shelley and Harriet were in London during the autumn of 1812, they did not omit to visit the Godwins, and they saw them frequently; but a dinner at their house on October 11 calls for particular attention. It was on this occasion that Bysshe probably met Mary Godwin, his future wife, for the first time. She had been spending the summer with her friends, the Baxters, in Scotland, but she returned home on the previous day. Mary, who had at the time but lately passed her fifteenth year, perhaps did not specially attract Bysshe's attention.

By the first week in December Bysshe had left London and was back at Tanyrallt, where he remained with Harriet and Eliza Westbrook till the following March. His departure was precipitated by an assault

## Parting from Harriet

made on him during the night of February 26, 1813, by a half-witted sheep-farmer.

For ninety-two years the mystery of this attack remained unsolved, and the account of it given by Bysshe, which is now proved to have been correct, has been described by many of the poet's biographers as either an hallucination of his brain or a trick to escape from his creditors at Tremadoc. Miss Margaret L. Crofts contributed to the *Century Magazine* for October 1905 a well-attested account of Shelley's adventure. In his wanderings over the mountains he had sometimes come on sheep that were dying of scab or some other lingering disease, and out of pity for these helpless creatures he would put an end to their sufferings by a kindly shot from the pistol which he usually carried. A rough Welsh mountain sheep-farmer was so exasperated by Shelley's well-meant ministrations that he and his friends went down to Tanyrallt one stormy night in February, and the farmer discharged a shot through the window with the intention of giving Shelley a good fright. Shelley fired, but his pistol flashed in the pan, whereupon the farmer entered the room, wrestled with him, and finally knocked him down. The rough face and figure of the farmer gave Shelley the impression that he saw the devil when he looked out at the man standing by a beech tree. The assailants gained their end, for

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Shelley, Harriet, and her sister left the house the next day and journeyed to Bangor on their way to Ireland.

After a stormy passage Shelley with the two ladies reached Dublin on March 9. Their object in revisiting the Irish capital was apparently nothing more than a desire to get away from the scenes of that ugly night at Tremadoc. During his previous visit Shelley had been too busy to see any of the beauties of Irish scenery, but on this occasion he made good the omission by going to Lake Killarney, where, according to Hogg, he occupied a cottage. The place made a deep and lasting impression on him, for he wrote to Peacock from Milan, some years after, that "Lake Como exceeds anything that I ever beheld in beauty, with the exception of the Arbutus Islands of Killarney."

Hogg had been invited to visit Shelley at Tanyrallt, but owing to the poet's hasty flight from that place, it was abandoned, and he was asked to come to Dublin. He journeyed to the Irish capital, only to find that the Shelleys had gone to Killarney, and after waiting a week or ten days for them he returned to England, vexed at his fruitless quest.

During his sojourn at Dublin, Shelley had sent Hookham the manuscript of *Queen Mab*, the writing of which had occupied him for some months. He had referred to the poem in his letter to Hookham of August 18, 1812, and enclosed, by way of specimen,

## Parting from Harriet

all that he had written of it at that date. He said, "I conceive that I have matter enough for six more cantos. You will perceive that I have not attempted to temper my constitutional enthusiasm in that poem. Indeed, a poem is safe; the iron-souled Attorney-General would scarcely dare to attack it. The Past, the Present, and the Future are the grand and comprehensive topics of this poem. I have not yet exhausted the second of them." He proposed to make the notes to *Queen Mab* long, philosophical, and anti-Christian, and to take the opportunity, he judged a safe one, of propagating his principles, which, he said, "I decline to do syllogistically in a poem. A poem very didactic is, I think, very stupid." He wished to have "only 250 copies printed, in a small neat quarto on fine paper, and so as to catch the aristocrats. They will not read it, but their sons and daughters may." Hookham, who probably superintended the printing of the poem, in small octavo, did not put his name to it nor that of the actual printer. The title-page of the volume, which was issued privately by Shelley, bears his own name as printer with the address of his father-in-law, 23 Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square, and the famous epigraph from Voltaire's correspondence, "Ecrasez l'infame."

Towards the end of March Shelley and Harriet departed for Dublin in great haste, and left Miss

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Westbrook at Killarney with a large library, but without money, so that, as Hogg said, she might not be tempted to discontinue her studies. By April 5, Shelley and his wife were in London at Chapel Street, and after staying for a few days at an hotel in Albemarle Street they took lodgings in Half-Moon Street, where they remained for several months. Hogg describes a little projecting window in the house, in which Shelley might be seen from the street all day long, book in hand, with lively gestures and bright eyes, so that Mrs. Newton said, "He wanted only a pan of clear water and a fresh turf to look like some young lady's lark hanging outside for air and song."<sup>1</sup>

During the summer of this year (1813), when the Shelleys were living somewhere in Pimlico, Harriet gave birth to her first-born, a girl, who was named Ianthe Elizabeth. Apparently Ianthe was of Shelley's choosing, after the Lady in *Queen Mab*; Elizabeth was the name of his favourite sister as well also as that of Harriet's sister. Ianthe Shelley, who became Mrs. Esdaile, died in June 1876, and her descendants are Shelley's only living representatives.

Once more Bysshe wrote to his father in the hope of a reconciliation, and, according to a statement in one of Harriet's letters, he expected to be forgiven.

<sup>1</sup> Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, vol. ii. p. 389.

## Parting from Harriet

She said that Mr. Shelley's family were very eager to be reconciled to Bysshe. Mr. Shelley's reply, however, was unfavourable.

*P. B. Shelley to Timothy Shelley*

COOKE'S HOTEL,  
ALBEMARLE ST.,  
May 4, 1813.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I once more presume to address you to state to you my sincere desire of being considered as worthy of a restoration to the intercourse of yourself and your family, which I forfeited by my follies.

Some time since I stated my feelings on this subject in a letter to the Duke of Norfolk. I was agreeably surprised by a visit from him the other day, and much regretted that illness prevented me from keeping my appointment with him on the succeeding morning. If, however, I could convince you of the change that has taken place in some of the most unfavourable traits of my character and of my willingness to make any concession that may be judged best for the interest of my family, I flatter myself that there would be little further need of his Grace's interference.

I hope the time is approaching when we shall consider each other as father and son with more confidence than ever, and that I shall no longer be a cause of disunion to the happiness of my family. I was happy to hear from John Grove, who dined with us yesterday, that you continue in good health. My wife unites with me in respectful regards.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From Hogg's *Life of Shelley*.

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Mr. Shelley replied in a letter, prompted by his solicitor,<sup>1</sup> that put an end to any hopes that Bysshe may have entertained.

*Timothy Shelley to P. B. Shelley*

MILLER'S HOTEL,  
May 26, 1813.

MY DEAR BOY,—I am sorry to find by the contents of your letter of yesterday that I was mistaken in the conclusion I drew from your former letter, in which you had assured me that a change had taken place in some of the most unfavourable Traits in your Character, as what regards your avow'd opinions are in my Judgment the most material parts of Character requiring amendment; and as you now avow there is no change effected in them, I must decline all further Communication, or any Personal Interview, until that shall be Effected, and I desire you will consider this as my final answer to anything you may have to offer.

If that Conclusion had not operated on my mind to give this answer, I desire you also to understand that I should not have received any Communication but through His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, as I know his exalted mind will protect me at the moment, and with the World. I beg to return all usual remembrance.—I am, Yr. Affecti. Father,

T. SHELLEY.

Bysshe wrote to the Duke of Norfolk, on May 28, to thank him for the warm interest that he had taken

<sup>1</sup> Whitton in his minute book writes on May 20, 1813: "Letter to Mr. Shelley advising on the letter to P. B."

## Parting from Harriet

in his concerns, and expressing regret that he should have occupied his time in "the vain and impossible task of reconciling" him and his father. Bysshe was prepared to make every reasonable concession to Mr. Shelley, but he was not, he said, "so degraded and miserable a slave as publicly to disavow an opinion which I believe to be true." Bysshe enclosed his father's reply, with this letter, for the Duke's inspection.

Bysshe came of age on August 4, 1813, but apparently he now had small prospect of immediately obtaining a settlement as regards his affairs. He had some debts, contracted in view of being in a position to liquidate them on attaining his majority, and they were now pressing. Despite Mr. Shelley's threat that he would not receive his son, Bysshe managed to see his father and to tell him that he had heard that efforts were on foot to deprive him of his interest in the estates under the will of his great-uncle, John Shelley. This was, of course, a baseless rumour. Mr. Shelley received his son kindly, but the interview had no beneficial result for him. Field Place was still forbidden ground, although Bysshe managed to correspond with his sisters and mother, from whom he received letters, his mother keeping him posted up in all the news regarding his father's movements.

Bysshe found much to interest him in town. *Queen Mab* was probably now about to be issued, and he

## Shelley in England

would constantly be in and out of the shop of Thomas Hookham, the friendly little publisher of New Bond Street, who apparently superintended the printing of the poem. The book was printed for private circulation, and Bysshe distributed the copies himself, but before doing so he cut out from many of them the title-page and the imprint at the end of the volume, as in both places his name appeared as the printer. This precaution was taken in order to avoid the danger of prosecution. From most of the copies that passed through his hands, the deeply appreciative dedication to Harriet was also removed. The volume bears the date of 1813, but as far as I am aware there is no published evidence as to the exact month when it was ready. The removal of the dedication by the author may indicate that it was put into circulation at the end of 1813, or possibly the beginning of 1814, when Shelley and Harriet were drifting apart, or that the copies so treated by him were distributed during, or after, that painful period of his life.

Bysshe and his wife did not see much of Godwin because, as Harriet wrote to Miss Nugent, "his wife is so dreadfully disagreeable that I could not bear the idea of seeing her. Mr. S. has done that away, tho', by telling G. that I could not bear the society of his darling wife. Poor man, we are not the only people who find her troublesome."

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Through Godwin, however, Shelley had made the acquaintance, when he visited London in the autumn of 1812, of John Frank Newton, author of *The Return to Nature, or a Defence of the Vegetable Regimen*, 1811. With his strong leanings towards vegetarianism Shelley was attracted to Newton and his book, and made use of the former in his vegetarian note in *Queen Mab*, which was subsequently printed as a separate pamphlet as *A Vindication of Natural Diet*.

At the Newtons' house in Chester Square Byshe was admitted to a circle of people whose tastes and ideas he found very congenial. Besides Newton and his wife there were Mrs. Boinville, sister to Mrs. Newton, and her daughter Cornelia, who afterwards became Mrs. Turner. In a letter from Shelley to Hogg belonging to the summer of 1813, he speaks of what was undoubtedly for him an unusual diversion : late hours and Vauxhall Gardens. " Last night your short note arrived, also beyond its hour, and the Newtons had already taken me with them. This night the Newtons have a party at Vauxhall ; if you will call here at nine o'clock we will go together."

In July Shelley, Harriet, and the inevitable Eliza went to Bracknell, where they took a furnished house, " High Elms," with the intention of remaining there until the following spring. The Newtons had been kind and helpful to Shelley, and Mrs. Boinville,

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who was especially interested in him, moved to Bracknell, where the intimacy of the two families continued. Mrs. Boinville and Mrs. Newton were the daughters of a wealthy West Indian planter who resided in England. His house was the resort of many a French *émigré*, and one of them, M. de Boinville, a man of position whose property had been confiscated, declared his love to Miss Collins, but, as the match was objected to by her father, they eloped, and were married at Gretna Green, and afterwards according to the rites of the Church of England. M. de Boinville went to Russia with Napoleon, and died during the retreat from Moscow in 1813, and shortly afterwards Mrs. Boinville lost her father. Her hair had become quite white through this double sorrow, but her face still retained much of its youthful beauty, and Shelley had named her Maimuna, after the lady in Southey's *Thalaba*, for

" Her face was as a damsel's face,  
And yet her hair was grey."

Shelley was becoming restless again towards the autumn of 1813. He gave up his house at Bracknell, and his thoughts turned once more towards Wales, but early in October he seems to have contemplated revisiting the Lakes. He had procured a carriage some months before, and in this he travelled north

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with Harriet, their little daughter, and Thomas Love Peacock. They went by way of Warwick, and after a week's journey from London they reached Low Wood Inn, near Windermere. After visiting the Calverts at Keswick, and failing to obtain a house, they decided on Edinburgh, and arrived there some days later.

Peacock, who was on a visit to Bracknell when Shelley persuaded him to accompany him on this journey, tells us that he saw the poet for the first time in 1812 just before he went to Tanyrallt. Shelley, in a letter to Hogg from Edinburgh, thus describes Peacock, with whose poetry he was already familiar, and it had won his admiration, but his estimate of the man was not very enthusiastic. "A new acquaintance is on a visit with us this winter. He is a very mild, agreeable man, and a good scholar. His enthusiasm is not very ardent, nor his views very comprehensive: but he is neither superstitious, ill-tempered, dogmatical, or proud."

When Shelley became better acquainted with Peacock he appreciated to the full the good qualities of the "laughing philosopher." Peacock seems to have taken more trouble than any other of Shelley's friends to induce him to find pleasure in some of the good things of this world, which he was inclined to neglect, partly owing to his habits of seclusion. Peacock interested himself in Shelley's Greek studies, and some

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years later took him to the opera, and endeavoured to induce him to cultivate a more generous diet : his prescription was " two mutton chops well peppered." The diet agreed with the poet, and he was not averse from the opera, but he went on with neither. It is possible that Peacock appreciated Shelley more than his poetry : this seems to have been the case with most of Bysshe's friends ; Byron, perhaps, being the one exception.

Shelley was at times subject to strange delusions, but, towards the end of 1813, he was troubled by a most extraordinary one. Peacock, who is our authority, tells us that " he fancied that a fat old woman who sat opposite to him in a mail-coach was afflicted with elephantiasis, that the disease was infectious and incurable, and that he had caught it from her. He was continually on the watch for its symptoms ; his legs were to swell to the size of an elephant's, and his skin was to be crumpled over like goose-skin. He would draw the skin of his own hands, arms, and neck very tight, and, if he discovered any deviation from smoothness, he would seize the person next to him, and endeavour by a corresponding pressure to see if any corresponding deviation existed. He often startled young ladies in an evening party by this singular process, which was as instantaneous as a flash of lightning. His friends took various methods of dis-

## Parting from Harriet

elling the delusion. When he found, as days rolled on, his legs retained their proportion and his skin its smoothness, the delusion died away."

Money matters again began to trouble Shelley while at Edinburgh, and he wrote to an unidentified correspondent on November 28, on whom he had been compelled to draw for a sum of £30, that the consequence of having the bill returned would necessitate, as he says, "our being driven out of our lodgings." On his return south, he went to stay alone, about the middle of February, with his kind friend Mrs. Boinville. From her house he wrote on March 13, 1814, to his father about his affairs, which had become so critical that he could no longer delay raising money by the sale of *post-obit* bonds to a considerable amount. He pointed out that the demands of moneylenders necessitated vast sacrifices, and that he did not propose to unsettle the estate by conceding them. He gave his father the credit for the will, but realised his lack of power to do all that he could reasonably expect. Sir Bysshe, he thought, must surely see that his hopes of perpetuating the integrity of the estates would be frustrated by neglecting to relieve the necessities of his grandson. Should he be driven to do so he would have to dismember the property in the event of the death of his grandfather and father.

Mr. Shelley had already been talking to Sir Bysshe

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about his son, and he had evidently made up his mind to do something for him when he wrote on March 7 to Whitton: ". . . My father talked to me abt. P. B. He said he was told he cod. do nothing from *a certain person*—I will tell you the reason *when I see you*—I cod. have told him a ready mode (but I forbore and bear in mind yr. hint), *i.e.* to pay the debts, give an allowance, & in the first instance lay a restraint, by Bonding, as they do at the Customs. My father said he would sell Castle Goring; that he does not mean, and any offer of so doing wod. be nutts for the unchristian and unfeeling-like spirit."

On March 15 Mr. Shelley again wrote to Whitton with reference to Bysshe's communication of March 13: "I enclose you P. B.'s letter; the tenor of it would not at all suit his grandfather's notions—and on my own part I would rather he would first acknowledge his God, then I might be led to believe his assertions. My assurances of perfect reconciliation flow'd from that source. I doubt, but there are considerable difficulties for him to encounter in procuring sufficient to answer the large demands. P. B. had better leave it to Mr. Amory [Bysshe's solicitor] to communicate these matters to you—I could wish Mr. Amory would so advise him."

On March 4, shortly before Bysshe wrote the last-quoted letter to his father, he had made the sale of

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a *post obit*. His object in raising this money was primarily, if not entirely, to assist Godwin. The indenture, however, was not made until July, and the transaction was therefore not then complete at the date of his letter to Mr. Shelley. The reversion of £8000 sterling was offered for sale on the above date at Garraway's Coffee House, Change Alley, "amply secured," as it was stated, "upon valuable freehold property, and made payable at the decease of the survivor of two gentlemen, one [Sir Bysshe] between 80 and 90, and the other [Mr. Shelley] upwards of 60 years of age, in case they are both survived by a gentleman [Bysshe] in his 22nd year." The purchasers were Messrs. Andrew John Nash and George Augustus Nash of Cornhill, who secured it for a sum of £2593, 10s.

The following copy of a letter to Messrs. Nash's solicitor, with regard to this transaction, is among the Shelley-Whitton papers and has not been included in the collected edition of Shelley's correspondence :

*P. B. Shelley to Mr. Teesdale*

OLD BOND STREET,  
May 6, 1814.

SIR,—I beg to inform you that to the best of my knowledge, having made every enquiry on the subject, there has been no portion of the Shelley Estate sold under the Settlement of 1791 except that to Lord

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George Cavendish. As to any transaction of my own I have raised no money on the reversion unless in one instance the sum of £500, and I assure you on my word of honour that I shall engage in no transaction that can be any way prejudicial to the interest of Mr. Nash, the purchaser.<sup>1</sup>—Yours, &c.,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Early in the summer of this year Bysshe paid his last visit to Field Place. His father and the three youngest children were absent, and he came at his mother's invitation. He walked alone from Bracknell to Horsham, and when within a few miles of Field Place a farmer gave him a seat in his travelling cart. The man, being ignorant whom he was carrying, amused Bysshe with descriptions of the country and its inhabitants, and when Field Place came in sight, he stated, as the most remarkable incident connected with the family, that young Master Shelley seldom went to church. When Bysshe arrived he was greatly fatigued by his journey. From a description of the visit, written in later years by Captain Kennedy, a young officer who had met with hospitality at Field Place, one is able to reconstruct the scene. Until his arrival Kennedy had not seen Bysshe, but

<sup>1</sup> Shortly after the death of Sir Bysshe in 1815 Shelley filed a Bill in Chancery against Messrs. Nash to have the Indenture dated 12th July 1814 rescinded, but the case went against the poet, judgment being given in favour of the defendants on May 28, 1818.

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the servants, especially the old butler, Laker, had spoken to him, and " he seemed to have won the hearts of the whole household." Mrs. Shelley had often spoken of her son to Kennedy ; " her heart yearned after him with all the fondness of a mother's love."

Kennedy went to Field Place on the morning following Bysshe's arrival, and " found him with his mother and two elder sisters in a small room off the drawing-room, which they had named Confusion Hall." He received Kennedy with frankness and kindness, as if he had known him from childhood, and he at once won the young soldier's heart. To continue Kennedy's account in his own words : " I fancy I see him now, as he sat by the window, and hear his voice, the tones of which impressed me with his sincerity and simplicity. His resemblance to his sister Elizabeth was as striking as if they had been twins. His eyes were most expressive, his complexion beautifully fair ; his features exquisitely fine ; his hair was dark, and no peculiar attention to its arrangement was manifest. In person he was slender and gentlemanlike, but inclined to stoop ; his gait was decidedly not military. The general appearance indicated great delicacy of constitution. One would at once pronounce him, that he was something different from other men. There was an earnestness in his manner, and such perfect gentleness of breeding and freedom from everything

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artificial, as charmed everyone. I never met a man who so immediately won upon one. The generosity of his disposition and utter unselfishness imposed upon him the necessity of strict self-denial in personal comforts. Consequently he was obliged to be most economical in his dress. He one day asked us how we liked his coat, the only one he had brought with him. We said it was very nice, it looked as if new. 'Well,' said he, 'it is an old black coat which I have had done up and smartened with metal buttons and a velvet collar.' As it was undesirable that Bysshe's presence in the country should be known, we arranged that in walking out he should wear my scarlet uniform, and that I should assume his outer garments. So he donned the soldier's dress and sallied forth. His head was so remarkably small that, though mine be not large, the cap came down over his eyes, the peak resting on his nose, and it had to be stuffed before it would fit him. His hat just stuck on the crown of my head. He certainly looked anything but a soldier.

"The metamorphosis was very amusing ; he enjoyed it much, and made himself perfectly at home in his unwonted garb. We gave him the name of Captain Jones, under which name we used to talk of him after his departure ; but, with all our care, Bysshe's visit could not be kept a secret. I chanced to mention the name of Sir James Mackintosh, of whom he

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expressed the highest admiration. He told me Sir James was intimate with one [Godwin] to whom he said he owed everything ; from whose book, *Political Justice*, he had derived all that was valuable in knowledge and virtue. He discoursed with eloquence and enthusiasm ; but his views seemed to me exquisitely metaphysical, and by no means clear, precise, or decided. He told me that he had already read the Bible four times. [Kennedy said ' in Hebrew,' which, as Hogg states, he never learnt ; he probably said ' in Greek,' as he was much addicted to reading the Septuagint.] He spoke of the Supreme Being as of infinite mercy and benevolence. He disclosed no fixed views of spiritual things ; all seemed wild and fanciful. He said that he once thought the surrounding atmosphere was peopled with the spirits of the departed. He reasoned and spoke as a perfect gentleman, and treated my arguments, boy as I was—I had lately completed my sixteenth year—with as much consideration and respect as if I had been his equal in ability and attainments. Shelley was one of the most sensitive of human beings ; he had a horror of taking life, and looked upon it as a crime. He read poetry with great emphasis and solemnity ; one evening he read aloud to us a translation of one of Goethe's poems, and at this day I think I hear him. In music he seemed to delight, as a medium of association :

## Shelley in England

the tunes which had been favourites in boyhood charmed him. There was one, which he played several times on the piano with one hand, that seemed to absorb him ; it was an exceedingly simple air which, I understand, his earliest love was wont to play for him. Poor fellow ! He soon left us, and I never saw him afterwards, but I can never forget him. It was his last visit to Field Place. He was an amiable and gentle being."

Mrs. Boinville was evidently aware of the crisis in Shelley's life, and, in allusion to his visit, she wrote from Bracknell to Hogg, on March 11, 1814 : " I will not have you despise homespun pleasures. Shelley is making a trial of them with us, and likes them so well that he is resolved to leave off rambling, and to begin a course of them himself. Seriously, I think his mind and body want rest. His journeys after what he has never found have racked his purse and his tranquillity. He is resolved to take a little care of the former in pity to the latter, which I applaud, and shall second with all my might. He has deeply interested us. In the course of your intimacy he must have made you feel what we now feel for him. He is seeking a house close to us ; and if he succeeds, we shall have an additional motive to induce you to come among us in the summer."

The following, one of the most pathetic letters that Shelley ever penned, was written from Mrs. Boinville's hospitable house ;

# Parting from Harriet

*P. B. Shelley to T. J. Hogg*

BRACKNELL,

*March 16, 1814.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I promised to write to you, when I was in the humour. Our intercourse has been too much interrupted for my consolation. My spirits have not sufficed to induce the exertion of determining me to write to you. My value, my affection for you, have sustained no diminution; but I am a feeble, wavering, feverish being, who requires support and consolation, which his energies are too exhausted to return.

I have been staying with Mrs. B[oinville] for the last month; I have escaped, in the society of all that philosophy and friendship combine, from the dismaying solitude of myself. They have revived in my heart the expiring flame of life. I have felt myself translated to a paradise which has nothing of mortality but its transitoriness; my heart sickens at the view of that necessity, which will quickly divide me from the delightful tranquillity of this happy home—for it has become my home. The trees, the bridge, the minutest object, have already a place in my affections.

My friend, you are happier than I. You have the pleasures as well as the pains of sensibility. I have sunk into a premature old age of exhaustion, which renders me dead to everything but the inenviable capacity of indulging the vanity of hope, and a terrible susceptibility to objects of disgust and hatred.

My temporal concerns are slowly rectifying themselves; I am astonished at my own indifference to

## Shelley in England

their event. I live here like the insect that sports in a transient sunbeam, which the next cloud shall obscure for ever. I am much changed from what I was. I look with regret to our happy evenings at Oxford, and with wonder at the hopes which in the excess of my madness I there encouraged. Burns says, you know,

“ Pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flower—the bloom is fled ;  
Or like the snow-falls in the river,  
A moment white—then lost forever.”

Eliza is still with us—not here !—but will be with me when the infinite malice of destiny forces me to depart. I am now but little inclined to contest this point. I certainly hate her with all my heart and soul. It is a sight which awakens an inexpressible sensation of disgust and horror, to see her caress my poor little Ianthe, in whom I may herafter find the consolation of sympathy. I sometimes feel faint with the fatigue of checking the overflowings of my unbounded abhorrence for this miserable wretch. But she is no more than a blind and loathsome worm that cannot see to sting.

I have begun to learn Italian again. I am reading Beccaria, “ Dei delitti e pene.” His essay seems to contain some excellent remarks, though I do not think it deserves the reputation it has gained. Cornelia assists me in this language. Did I not once tell you that I thought her cold and reserved ? She is the reverse of this, as she is the reverse of everything bad. She inherits all the divinity of her mother.

What have you written ? I have been unable to

## Parting from Harriet

write a common letter. I have forced myself to read Beccaria and Dumont's *Bentham*. I have sometimes forgotten that I am not an inmate of this delightful home—that a time will come, which will cast me again into the boundless ocean of abhorred society.

I have written nothing, but one stanza, which has no meaning, and that I have only written in thought :

“ Thy dewy locks sink on my breast ;  
Thy gentle words stir poison there ;  
Thou hast disturbed the only rest  
That was the portion of despair !  
Subdued to Duty's hard control,  
I could have borne my wayward lot ;  
The chains that bind this ruined soul  
Had cankered then—but crushed it not.”

This is the vision of a delirious and distempered dream, which passes away at the cold clear light of morning. Its surpassing excellence and exquisite perfections have no more reality than the colour of an autumnal sunset. Adieu!—Believe me, truly and affectionately yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.<sup>1</sup>

Hogg thought that one might infer from the tone and temper of this letter “ that his family might have had him then on reasonable, on easy terms, had they known how to negotiate a treaty of peace. They might probably have lured the wild hawk, the peregrine falcon, back to his perch without difficulty. Possibly they did not know it ; certainly they did not know how to set about it ; and the young wanderer

<sup>1</sup> From Hogg's *Life of Shelley*.

## Shelley in England

was reserved for other, and for higher and more important destinies." Probably Mrs. Boinville, who had herself made a Scotch marriage, counselled Shelley to remarry in England, so as to avoid any question of the validity of the ceremony in Edinburgh. Much depended on the legitimacy of his heir, should he have one, and he was well advised to take this step. On March 22 he and Godwin went to Doctors' Commons and obtained a License. The ceremony took place at St. George's, Hanover Square, on March 24.

The "Allegations," filed at the Vicar-General's office and made in support of the application for License to marry, state that :

On the 22nd March 1814 appeared personally Percy Bysshe Shelley and made Oath that he is of the Parish of Saint George Hanover Square in the County of Middlesex of the age of twenty-one<sup>1</sup> years and upwards, and that on the twenty-ninth day of August one thousand eight hundred and eleven, he being then a bachelor and a minor of the age of nineteen years and upwards was joined in holy matrimony by the Reverend — Robertson, a minister of the Church of Scotland, at his dwelling-house in the City of Edinburgh, according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of Scotland, to Harriet Shelley then Westbrook spinster and also a minor of the age of sixteen years and upwards, and he further made Oath that the said Harriet Shelley is now of the Parish of

<sup>1</sup> This is incorrect : his birthday was on Aug. 4th.

## Parting from Harriet

Saint George Hanover Square aforesaid a minor of the age of eighteen years and upwards, and that to obviate all doubts which have arisen or may arise touching the validity of the said marriage the appearer and the said Harriet Shelley heretofore Westbrook are willing and desirous of being married again in strict conformity of law by and with the consent of John Westbrook, the natural and lawful father of the said Harriet Shelley heretofore Westbrook the minor aforesaid, and that he knoweth of no lawful impediment by reason of any precontract Consanguinity Affinity or other lawful cause whatsoever to hinder the said intended marriage, and prayed a license to solemnize the same in the Parish Church of Saint George Hanover Square aforesaid, and further made Oath that the usual place of abode of him the appearer hath been in the said Parish of Saint George Hanover Square for the space of Four weeks last past.

(Signed) PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

Sworn before me

(Signed) SAML J. MEYRICK *SURR<sup>TE</sup>*.

Also appeared personally the said John Westbrook of the Parish of Saint George Hanover Square aforesaid, Gentleman, and made Oath that he is the natural and lawful father of the said Harriet Shelley (heretofore Westbrook, Spinster) the Minor aforesaid, and that he is consenting to the above intended Marriage.

(Signed) JOHN WESTBROOK.

23 of March 1814 the said John Westbrook was sworn before me

(Signed) S. PARTON *SUR*

# Shelley in England

SAINT GEORGE HANOVER SQUARE REGISTER  
Book of Marriages Vol. II. Fo. 189.

*Marriages in March 1814. No. 164.*

Percy Bysshe Shelley and Harriet Shelley (formerly Harriet Westbrook, Spinster, a Minor), both of this Parish, were remarried in this Church by License (the Parties having been already married to each other according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of Scotland) in order to obviate all doubts that have arisen or shall or may arise touching or concerning the validity of the aforesaid Marriage by and with the consent of John Westbrook, the natural and lawful Father of the said Minor, this twenty-fourth day of March 1814.

by me EDW<sup>d</sup>. WILLIAMS, Curate.

This Marriage was solemnised between us { PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY,  
HARRIET SHELLEY, formerly  
HARRIET WESTBROOK.

In the presence of JOHN WESTBROOK,  
JOHN STANLEY.

Until their return south after the second visit to Edinburgh Bysshe and Harriet seem to have been happy together. There is no doubt from her letters to Miss Nugent that she was devoted to him ; and he regarded her with sincere affection.

For his dedication to her in *Queen Mab* he had written in 1813 :

“ Whose is the love that, gleaming through the world,  
Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn ?  
Whose is the warm and partial praise,  
Virtue's most sweet reward ?

## Parting from Harriet

Beneath whose looks did my reviving soul  
Ripen in truth and virtuous daring grow ?  
Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,  
And loved mankind the more ?

Harriet! on thine :—thou wert my purer mind ;  
Thou wert the inspiration of my song ;  
Thine are these early wilding flowers,  
Though garlanded by me.

Then press unto thy breast this pledge of love ;  
And know, though time may change and years may roll,  
Each floweret gather'd in my heart  
It consecrates to thine."

During their short married life of two years Bysshe and Harriet had mainly depended on each other for companionship. Now they were beginning to find distractions, both after their own tastes. They both possessed strong personal attractions for the opposite sex, and clouds were gathering. Harriet was but eighteen, though, since she had been a mother, she had felt much older. "When I look back," she wrote, "to the time before I was married, I seem to have lived a long time." Shelley was still undeveloped, but he had already begun to feel his wings. His *Letter to Lord Ellenborough* was a proof that he possessed gifts for writing prose ; the quality of his letters to his friends had improved ; and *Queen Mab* was a not unworthy precursor of *Alastor*. He was in the ascendant, and poor Harriet was powerless to keep him much longer by her side.

## Shelley in England

Both Shelley and Harriet were devoted to their first child. Peacock tells us that Shelley "would walk up and down a room with it in his arms for a long time together, singing to it a monotonous melody of his own making, which ran on the repetition of a word of his own making, 'Yáhmani, Yáhmani, Yáhmani, Yáhmani.' It did not please me, but, what was more important, it pleased the child, and lulled it when it was fretful. Shelley was extremely fond of his children. He was pre-eminently an affectionate father." Harriet's letters to Miss Nugent contain several references to her little girl, which show that she likewise was an affectionate mother. But she refused to suckle the child, and, to quote Peacock again, she provided it with a wet nurse whom Shelley did not like, and Ianthe was much looked after by his wife's sister, whom Shelley intensely disliked.<sup>1</sup>

Eliza Westbrook, who had come to stay with the Shelleys shortly after their marriage, and had since stuck to them with the tenacity of a leech, must be reckoned as an important factor in our consideration of Shelley's separation from Harriet. Had this well-meaning woman left their house some months earlier, events still might have righted themselves. The intense loathing with which Shelley regarded his

<sup>1</sup> I quote in the following account from a summary that I wrote for another publication, of the process of Shelley's separation from Harriet.

## Parting from Harriet

sister-in-law finds expression in his letter to Hogg on March 16, 1814. A month later Eliza Westbrook departed from the Shelley household.

Harriet's coldness and want of sympathy towards Shelley at this time may have been the result of his undisguised dislike of her much-beloved sister. "His violent antipathy," says Hogg, with regard to Shelley's aversion to Eliza Westbrook, "was probably not less unreasonable than his former excess of deference and blind compliance and concession towards a person whose counsels and direction could never have been prudent, safe, or judicious." At this most critical period Harriet foolishly allowed herself to be influenced by her sister, under whose advice she probably acted when, some months earlier, she prevailed upon Shelley to provide her with a carriage, silver plate, and expensive clothes. Shelley's affairs at this time were already embarrassed, and the fact that Harriet should care for such gew-gaws was to him altogether repugnant, for he had formerly described "the ease and simplicity of her habits" as constituting, in his eyes, her greatest charm.

After the birth of her first child Harriet's manner underwent a change. "Her studies," Hogg tells us, "which had been so constant and exemplary, had dwindled away to nothing, and Bysshe had ceased to express any interest in them, and to urge her, as of

## Shelley in England

old, to devote herself to the cultivation of her mind. When I called upon her, she proposed a walk, if the weather was fine, instead of the vigorous and continuous readings of preceding years. The walk commonly conducted us to some fashionable bonnet shop ; the reading, it is not to be denied, was sometimes tiresome ; the contemplation of bonnets was always so. When I called upon Bysshe, Harriet was often absent ; she had gone out with Eliza—gone to her father's. Bysshe himself was sometimes in London, and sometimes at Bracknell, where he spent a good deal of his time in visiting certain friends [Mrs. Boinville and her daughter], with whom at this period he was in close alliance, and upon terms of the greatest intimacy, and by which connection his subsequent conduct, I think, was much influenced.”<sup>1</sup>

Shelley found Madame de Boinville “the most admirable specimen of a human being” he had ever seen, although in later years he had reason to believe that “it was hardly possible for a person of the extreme subtlety and delicacy of Mrs. Boinville’s understanding and affections to be quite sincere and constant.” Hogg distrusted her ; he did not appreciate the miscellaneous company of faddists who were to be met at her house ; but her society stimulated Shelley’s intellectual development, and caused him to view the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Shelley*, vol. ii. pp. 500–501.

## Parting from Harriet

narrow outlook of Harriet and her sister with dissatisfaction.

Shelley's re-marriage, on March 24, cannot be adduced as a proof of his affection for Harriet. His state of mind at this time is reflected in those stanzas which he probably wrote just before he concluded his visit to Mrs. Boinville. They are dated April 1814, when he contemplated, with a sinking heart, his inevitable return to an existence of dreary monotony with Harriet and her sister.

### STANZAS—APRIL 1814

Away ! the moor is dark beneath the moon,  
Rapid clouds have drunk the last pale beam of even :  
Away ! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,  
And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven.  
Pause not ! The time is past ! Every voice cries, Away !  
Tempt not with one last tear thy friend's ungentle mood :  
Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat thy stay :  
Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

Away, away ! to thy sad and silent home ;  
Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth ;  
Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,  
And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth ;  
The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around thine head,  
The blooms of dewy spring shall gleam beneath thy feet :  
But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds the dead,  
Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou and peace  
may meet.

The cloud shadows of midnight possess their own repose,  
For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in the deep ;  
Some respite to its turbulence unresting ocean knows ;  
Whatever moves or toils, or grieves, hath its appointed sleep.

## Shelley in England

Thou in the grave shall rest—yet till the phantoms flee  
Which that house and heath and garden made dear to thee ere-  
while,  
Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings, are not free,  
From the music of two voices and the light of one sweet smile.

According to Mrs. Boinville's letter to Hogg of April 18, 1814,<sup>1</sup> Shelley was then at Bracknell. Harriet had gone to town, presumably to her father's, and Eliza Westbrook had taken her departure. Although Harriet had now become cold and proud, Shelley still hoped to regain her love, and in some verses inscribed "To Harriet, 1814,"<sup>2</sup> he makes a pathetic appeal to her affection. Whether Harriet was moved by this appeal or not, we do not know. She evidently never intended to alienate herself from Shelley, but she was staying at Bath, with her father, during the early days of July, while Shelley had remained in London since the end of May, excepting for a period of ten days, from June 8th to the 18th. Shelley, however, still continued to correspond with Harriet, as is shown by the following letter which she addressed to Thomas Hookham on July 6 or 7, 1814, from 6 Queen's Square, Bath.

MY DEAR SIR,—You will greatly oblige me by giving the enclosed to Mr. Shelley. I would not trouble you, but it is now four days since I have heard from him,

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Shelley*, vol. ii. p. 553.

<sup>2</sup> First printed in Professor Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 413.

## Parting from Harriet

which to me is an age. Will you write by return of post, and tell me what has become of him? If you tell me that he is well, I shall not come to London; but if I do not hear from you or him, I shall certainly come, as I cannot endure this dreadful state of suspense. You are his friend, and you can feel for me.—  
I remain, yours truly, H. S.

Although Shelley's own pecuniary affairs in 1814 were most unsatisfactory, his admiration for Godwin was such that he engaged to help him out of his embarrassments by assisting him to raise a sum of money, said to be no less than three thousand pounds. This was the first of these negotiations on behalf of Godwin, which continued to be such a source of trouble to Shelley almost till his last days. He had not been to Godwin's house since March 22, when he went with him to procure his marriage licence. But it was now necessary for Shelley to be much in Godwin's company, and after he returned to London on July 18 he joined the Skinner Street household each day at dinner. It was during these days that Shelley first came in contact with Mary Godwin, who had just returned from Scotland on a visit to the Baxters. On June 8, the date of Lord Cochrane's trial, Hogg first saw Mary Godwin. He met Shelley in Cheapside, and walked with him through Newgate Street to Godwin's shop in Skinner Street. Shelley inquired

## Shelley in England

for Godwin, who was not at home, and, while he was waiting for the philosopher in his book-room, "the door was partially and softly opened. A thrilling voice called, 'Shelley!' A thrilling voice answered, 'Mary!' And he darted out of the room like an arrow from the bow of the far-shooting king. A very young female, fair and fair-headed, pale indeed, with a piercing look, wearing a frock of tartan, an unusual dress in London at the time, had called him out of the room. He was absent a very short time—a minute or two—and then returned. 'Godwin is out; there is no use in waiting.' So we continued our walk along Holborn. 'Who was that, pray?' I asked; 'a daughter?' 'Yes.' 'A daughter of William Godwin?' 'The daughter of Godwin and Mary.'"

The shop at Skinner Street was the recognised place of pilgrimage for those who venerated the name of Mary Wollstonecraft. Godwin had gone to live there after her death, but there were still some relics that lingered about the place to remind the visitor of her memory. Godwin himself was there, and his young daughter who bore her mother's name, Mary Wollstonecraft, while Opie's fine painting of the author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* looked down from its place over the chimney-piece in the parlour.

## Parting from Harriet

Mary was now a girl of sixteen, with a head and neck afterwards compared to a bust of Clytie, and she was devoted to her mother's memory, of whose life she had heard at least something from her father's lips. The girl was accustomed to visit her mother's grave in St. Pancras Churchyard, and here, it is said, she and Shelley plighted their troth in the summer of 1814. Some lines which Shelley addressed to Mary, said<sup>1</sup> to have been written in the June of this year, are a confession of his passion :

### TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN

Mine eyes were dim with tears unshed ;  
Yes, I was firm—thus wert not thou ;  
My baffled looks did fear yet dread  
To meet thy looks—I could not know  
How anxiously they sought to shine  
With soothing pity upon mine.

To sit and curb the soul's mute rage  
Which preys upon itself alone ;  
To curse the life which is the cage  
Of fettered grief that dares not groan,  
Hiding from many a careless eye  
The scorned load of agony.

Whilst thou alone, then not regarded  
The [     ] thou alone should be  
To spend years thus, and be rewarded,  
As thou, sweet love, requited me  
When none were near—Oh ! I did wake  
From torture for that moment's sake.

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<sup>1</sup> By Dr. Richard Garnett.

## Shelley in England

Upon my heart thy accents sweet  
Of peace and pity fell like dew  
On flowers half dead ;—thy lips did meet  
Mine tremblingly ; thy dark eyes threw  
Their soft persuasion on my brain,  
Charming away its dream of pain.

We are not happy, sweet ! our state  
Is strange, and full of doubt and fear ;  
More need of words that ills abate ;  
Reserve or censure come not near  
Our sacred friendship, lest there be  
No solace left for thou and me.

Gentle and good and mild thou art,  
Nor can I live if thou appear  
Aught but thyself, or turn thine heart  
Away from me, or stoop to wear  
The mask of scorn, although it be  
To hide the love thou feel'st for me.

One other written proof of their love-making is still extant. It is in a copy of *Queen Mab* which Shelley gave her, and wrote inside the cover in pencil, "Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, P.B.S.," and in another place, "You see, Mary, I have not forgotten you." From this book he had removed, as was his custom, the title-page and the imprint at the end, but he retained the dedication to Harriet, and wrote below it carefully in ink : "Count Slobendorf was about to marry a woman who, attracted solely by his fortune, proved his selfishness by deserting him in prison."

Mary wrote on the fly-leaves at the end of the volume : "July 1814. This book is sacred to me,

## Parting from Harriet

and as no other creature shall ever look into it, I may write in it what I please—yet what shall I write?—that I love the author beyond all the powers of expression, and that I am parted from him, dearest and only love—by that love we have promised to each other, although I may not be yours, I can never be another's. But I am thine, exclusively thine.

“ ‘ By the kiss of love, the glance none saw beside,  
The smile none else might understand,  
The whispered thought of hearts allied,  
The pressure of the thrilling hand.’ <sup>1</sup>

“I have pledged myself to thee, and sacred is the gift. I remember your words: ‘You are now, Mary, going to mix with many, and for a moment I shall depart, but in the solitude of your chamber I shall be with you.’ Yes, you are ever with me, sacred vision.

“ ‘ But ah! I feel in this was given  
A blessing never meant for me,  
Thou art too like a dream from heaven  
For earthly love to merit thee.’ ” <sup>2</sup>

Suggestions have been made that Harriet was unfaithful to Shelley before their separation, and that she was in love with a Major Ryan, who is mentioned in her correspondence with Miss Nugent. Apparently there is nothing to support this supposition; on the

<sup>1</sup> From Byron's "To Thyrza," the first line is altered.

<sup>2</sup> From Byron's lines beginning "If sometimes in the haunts of men."

## Shelley in England

contrary, the evidence is entirely in her favour. Peacock, Hogg, and Hookham, all of whom knew her intimately, believed her to be perfectly innocent of any guilt, and Thornton, Hunt, and Trelawny shared the same belief. On the other hand, Shelley is said to have been convinced to the contrary in July 1814, and to have held this opinion to the day of his death. But if Shelley had not thought her guilty, the fact that he was certain she no longer loved him was sufficient in his sight to make it impossible for him to live with Harriet as her husband.

The convictions on the subject of marriage that he had expressed in *Queen Mab* in 1813 remained his convictions in 1814. He felt he was free to give his heart to Mary, with whom he was now deeply in love. Harriet failed to realise that she had lost Shelley, and she came to London, at his request, on July 14, when he disclosed to her his position. Peacock says : " The separation did not take place by mutual consent. I cannot think that Shelley ever so represented it. He never did so to me ; and the account which Harriet herself gave me of the entire proceeding was decidedly contradictory to any such supposition. He might well have said, after seeing Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, '*Ut vidi ! ut perii !*' Nothing that I ever read in tale or history could ever present a more striking image of a sudden, violent, irresistible, un-

## Parting from Harriet

controllable passion than that under which I found him labouring when, at his request, I went up from the country to call on him in London. Between his old feelings towards Harriet, *from whom he was not then separated*, and his new passion for Mary, he showed in his looks, in his gestures, in his speech, the state of a mind suffering, 'like a little kingdom, the nature of an insurrection.' His eyes were bloodshot, his hair and dress disordered. He caught up a bottle of laudanum, and said, 'I never part from this.' He added, 'I am always repeating your lines from "Sophocles":

' "Man's happiest lot is not to be ;  
And when we tread life's thorny steep,  
Most blest are they, who earliest free  
Descend to Earth's eternal sleep." '

Again, he said more calmly, 'Everyone who knows me must know that the partner of my life should be one who can feel poetry and understand philosophy. Harriet is a noble animal, but she can do neither.' I said, 'It always appeared to me that you were very fond of Harriet.' Without affirming or denying this he answered, 'But you did not know how I hated her sister ! ' "

## CHAPTER XV

### THE DEATH OF HARRIET

Shelley's elopement with Mary Godwin—His letter to Harriet—Poverty in London—Birth of Charles Bysshe Shelley—Death of Sir Bysshe Shelley—His will—Shelley's income—Life at Bishopgate—The maintenance of Shelley's children—Shelley acts on the stage at Windsor—The case of *Du Cane v. Shelley*—*Alastor*—Shelley's second visit to the Continent—Godwin's unfriendly attitude—Shelley returns to England—Makes his will—The death of Fanny Godwin—Death of Harriet Shelley—Inquest on her body—Her grave.

HAVING reached that point when Shelley parted from Harriet, I shall in the following chapters tell as much of his life as is necessary to illustrate the unpublished material in the Shelley-Whitton papers.

Mary Godwin, accompanied by Clare Clairmont,<sup>1</sup> left her father's shop in Skinner Street at five o'clock on the morning of July 28, 1814, walked to the corner of Hatton Garden, and found Shelley in waiting with a post-chaise. At the moment of parting, Clare was persuaded to enter the carriage with Mary, as she could speak French, which was an attainment that neither Shelley nor Mary possessed. It was a

<sup>1</sup> Clara Jane Mary Clairmont, who was known in her family as Jane, adopted the name of Clare, Clara, or Claire towards the end of the year 1814.

## The Death of Harriet

blazingly hot day, hotter than had been known for many years in England, and Mary was overcome with faintness, so that it was found necessary for her to rest at each stage. But these delays gave Shelley some anxious moments, and at Dartford he took four horses in order to outstrip pursuit. Dover was reached before four o'clock in the afternoon, and Mary refreshed herself with a sea-bath. The fugitives, who were too impatient to wait until the following day for the packet, hired a small boat and resolved to cross the Channel the same evening, the seamen promising them a passage of two hours. The evening was beautifully fine, but as night came on and the moon rose a heavy swell and a fresh breeze produced a rough sea. The journey was prolonged by the bad weather ; Mary was very ill, and she rested against Shelley's knees as hour after hour went by. Suddenly a thunder squall struck the sail, the boat was in peril and almost overturned, but the wind then changed and they made straight for Calais. Mary at length fell asleep, and still slumbered while Shelley watched the sun rise over France.

Mrs. Godwin had started in pursuit of the girls as soon as they were missed ; she crossed, on the following day, in the packet for which Shelley had refused to wait, and managed to catch them up at Calais. Shelley was informed " that a fat lady had arrived,

## Shelley in England

who said that he had run away with her daughter." The lady was, of course, Mrs. Godwin. Clare spent the night with her mother, who endeavoured to induce her to return home. On the following day Clare was undecided what to do, until Shelley counselled her to take time to consider, whereupon she chose to bear Mary company. So Mrs. Godwin went back alone, and "without answering a word."

The two girls, dressed in black satin, now proceeded with Shelley towards Paris, where they remained for a week. Shelley, with characteristic want of foresight, had neglected to provide himself with sufficient money, and he was forced to sell his watch and chain for eight napoleons. But he managed to obtain further funds from a French man of business, and they were then able to continue their journey towards Switzerland. They purchased a donkey with the intention of riding him by turns, but the poor beast was scarcely able to carry their portmanteau, much less one of the party. So they sold him and purchased a mule, which for some time carried Mary and the luggage. This arrangement continued, Shelley and Clare walking beside the animal, until the poet hurt his ankle on August 12, and was obliged to ride while the girls followed him on foot. The same evening they reached Troyes, and on the day after Shelley wrote to Harriet.

# The Death of Harriet

*P. B. Shelley to Harriet Shelley*

TROYES (120 miles from Paris on  
the way to Switzerland),  
Aug. 13, 1814.

MY DEAREST HARRIET,—I write to you from this detestable town: I write to show that I do not forget you: I write to urge you to come to Switzerland, where you will at least find one firm and constant friend; to whom your interests will be always dear—by whom your feelings will never wilfully be injured. From none can you expect this but me—all else are unfeeling or selfish, or have beloved friends of their own as Mrs. B[oinville], to whom their attention and affection is confined.

I will write at length from Neufchatel or you direct your letters “d’être laissé à la Bureau de Poste Neufchatel”—until you hear again.

We have journeyed from Paris on foot with a mule to carry our baggage; and Mary, who has not been sufficiently well to walk, fears the fatigue of walking.

We passed through a fertile country, neither interesting from the character of its inhabitants nor the beauty of the scenery. We came 120 miles in four days; the last two days we passed over the country that was the seat of war. I cannot describe to you the frightful desolation of this scene; village after village entirely ruined and burned, the white ruins towering in innumerable forms of destruction among the beautiful trees. The inhabitants were famished; families once independent now beg their bread in this wretched country; no provisions; no accommodation; filth, misery, and famine everywhere. (You will see nothing of this on your route to Geneva.)

## Shelley in England

I must remark to you that, dreadful as the calamities are, I can scarcely pity the inhabitants ; they are the most unamiable, inhospitable, and unaccommodating of the human race. We go by some carriage from this town to Neufchatel, because I have strained my leg and am unable to walk. I hope to be recovered by that time ; but on our last day's journey I was perfectly unable to walk. Mary resigned the mule to me. Our walk has been, excepting this, sufficiently agreeable ; we have met none of the robbers they prophesied at Paris. You shall hear our adventures more detailed if I do not hear at Neufchatel that I am soon to have the pleasure of communicating to you in person, and of welcoming you to some sweet retreat I will procure for you among the mountains.

I have written to Peacock to superintend money affairs : he is expensive, inconsiderate, and cold, but surely not utterly perfidious and unfriendly and unmindful of our kindness to him : besides, interest will secure his attention to these things. I wish you to bring with you the two deeds which Tahourdin has to prepare for you, as also a copy of the settlement. Do not part with any of your money. But what shall be done about the books ? You can consult on the spot. With love to my sweet little Ianthe, ever most affectionately yours,

S.

I write in great haste : we depart directly.<sup>1</sup>

This letter reveals the side of Shelley's character that enabled him to arrive at a decision without regard to conventions. His suggestion that Harriet

<sup>1</sup> From Dowden's *Life of Shelley*.

## The Death of Harriet

should join him on his holiday with Mary and Clare would have been not only extraordinary but base, were it not clear that he was thoroughly sincere. Notwithstanding his conviction that Harriet had deserted him, and that he could no longer be a husband to her, he believed he could still stand by her as her best friend, and one who was bound to continue to take an interest in her welfare.

At the date of Shelley's visit to the Continent, France had all but seen the last of Napoleon, who had abdicated some two months earlier and withdrawn himself to exile at Elba, while Bourbon Louis XVIII reigned over a people exhausted by a twenty years' war. Shelley passed over ground that still bore the scars of battle and plunder, where, but a few months before, Napoleon's wearied legions had been in deadly conflict with the Prussians. It is unlikely that these scenes of desolation were ever effaced from Shelley's mind.

At Troyes the mule was sold, an open carriage purchased for five napoleons, and a driver, who proved incompetent, was engaged. A week later they had reached Neufchâtel. Here Shelley obtained a small sum of money, and with it he pressed on to the Lake of Lucerne, where he engaged two rooms in a château at Brunnen at a louis a month for six months. He was probably unable to take them for a shorter period, but they were only occupied for forty-eight hours,

## Shelley in England

when the travellers decided to turn their faces towards England. It was Shelley's hope that, by taking advantage of the Reuss and Rhine, he would be able to perform the journey entirely by water. Travelling through Germany and Holland, they made a brave attempt to carry out his plan, but they sometimes found it necessary to take a land conveyance. Arriving at length at Rotterdam, they sailed on September 8 for London, which they reached on September 13. .

From the day that Mary joined her lot with Shelley they kept a joint diary. From this journal, with the addition of some letters written home to Peacock, Mary compiled a little account of this journey and their later visit to the Continent, which was subsequently published in 1817, with the title *History of a Six Weeks' Tour through a Part of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland*. Shelley on his arrival in London was penniless, and not having the wherewithal even to pay for his passage and meet other smaller charges, he drove at once to his bank, to find that all his funds had been drawn. Miss Clairmont stated that while abroad Shelley had instructed his banker to honour Harriet's calls for money as far as his funds allowed. Shelley applied to Harriet, who gave him a sum of twenty pounds, and who added "the reproaches of an injured wife." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. pp. 463-4.

## The Death of Harriet

Shortly after Shelley and Mary arrived in London they engaged lodgings at 56 Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, and for the present Clare remained with them. Shelley took an early opportunity of writing to William Godwin, who replied that in future he would only receive communications through his solicitor. Gossipers had been busy, and it was whispered that Godwin had sold his own girl Mary, and his wife's daughter Clare Clairmont, to Shelley for £800 and £700 respectively. That this was merely a rumour, and that Shelley, who, in eloping with Mary, had done no more than put Godwin's early anti-matrimonial teaching into practice, did not make the slander easier to bear. Godwin's philosophical calm for once was shaken, and, vital as Shelley's aid was to his existence, he was resolved to accept it, but with a gloved hand. Shelley did not display any resentment or bad feeling towards Godwin for his aloofness. He still regarded the author of *Political Justice*, and the father of his Mary, as the fountain-head of wisdom and truth, and he did not relax in his endeavours to serve him.

Shelley's diary during these days shows that he was again reading, with many other books, *Political Justice*, and that visits were frequently paid to Harriet, and received from Hogg, Hookham, and almost daily from Peacock. Shelley spent much of his time in

## Shelley in England

endeavouring to raise money for his own needs as well as for those of Godwin. But he found that money was very scarce, and he could not obtain any. As October dragged on, Shelley was again in danger of arrest at the instance of his creditors, and he had to leave his lodgings and go into hiding for fear of the bailiffs. Mary could only meet him furtively at odd places, such as Staple Inn or Bartlett's Buildings, a quiet *cul de sac* at the end of Skinner Street, off Snow Hill, or at St. Paul's Cathedral. They had been obliged to change their rooms more than once. One day, when they were living in the squalor of a St. Pancras lodging-house, the people demanded their money, and, on being disappointed, refused to send up the dinner to the hungry young people. Events now shaped themselves so as to contribute thoroughly to Shelley's and Mary's misery. They had to endure dire poverty and dismal accounts of affairs at Skinner Street. Godwin, moreover, was irreconcilable, Mrs. Godwin slanderous, and Clare often moody, sullen, and in the way. Harriet, so Shelley believed, was plotting with Hookham, from whom he had hopes of help in the way of bail from his creditors. These trials served, if anything, to draw Shelley and Mary together, and, as they could not always meet, they wrote to one another love-letters full of faith for the future. Mary, lonely, paid frequent visits to the tomb of her mother, Mary

## The Death of Harriet

Wollstonecraft, at St. Pancras Churchyard, and one day she went there to read her father's *Essay on Sepulchres*. On Sundays Shelley, safe from his pursuers, was able to return home, to his and Mary's delight. November 6 was one of these happy occasions, and Mary wrote in the diary: "Talk to Shelley. He writes a heap of letters. Read part of *St. Leon*. Talk to him all the evening; this is a day devoted to Love in idleness. Go to sleep early in the evening. Shelley goes away a little before 10."

On December 6 Shelley heard that Harriet had given birth to a son. This intelligence was conveyed to him in a letter from Hookham, and also in one from Harriet herself, telling him that the child had been born a week. Mary noted in the diary on this date, with a touch of resentment: "Shelley writes a number of circular letters of this event, which ought to be ushered in with ringing of bells, &c., for it is the son of *his wife*"; and she speaks of Harriet's letter, which was written as "from a *deserted wife*." On the following day Shelley called on Harriet, "who," said Mary, "treats him with insulting selfishness."

Harriet told her Irish correspondent, Miss Nugent, on December 11 that she had "been confined a fortnight on Wednesday—that is to say, on November 30. He is an eight months' child, and very like his unfortunate father, who is more depraved than ever. . . .

## Shelley in England

He is a very fine child for the time. I have seen his father : he came to see me as soon as he knew of the event : but as to his tenderness to me none remains. He said he was glad it was a boy, because he would make money cheaper. You see how that noble soul is debased. Money now, not philosophy, is the grand spring of his actions. Indeed, the pure and enlightened philosophy he once delighted in has flown. He is no longer that pure and good being he once was, nor can he ever retrieve himself."

Shelley was, in legal phraseology, tenant in tail male in remainder expectant on the deaths of his grandfather and father. He had in 1814, on the occasion of the transaction with the Messrs. Nash, levied a fine without the concurrence of his grandfather or father. Such fine created what is termed a base fee, *i.e.* an estate which would continue so long as he had issue male. Shelley certainly was anxious to procure money, and much of his time, since his return from the Continent, had been occupied with lawyers and money-lenders ; he wanted money for Godwin, and to relieve his own necessities, which were so pressing that he had been living for many weeks in daily expectation of arrest for debt. He had applied through his solicitor to Mr. Shelley for an increase in his allowance, and Mr. Whitton replied, on December 10, that " Mr. P. B. Shelley is well aware that his father has not the

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means . . . of making to him a greater allowance than he now does." Shelley was in want of a sum of £2000, of which he intended to devote £1200 to Godwin, and the rest he required for his own debts. Whitton discussed the question of effecting a re-settlement of the estates with Mr. Tim Shelley, or of obtaining for him in fee the estate under the will of John Shelley, the brother of Sir Bysshe. Neither of these suggestions could be put into practice without the concurrence of Sir Bysshe, to whom it was inadvisable to write, as he was now very old, ailing, and indeed nearing his end. Mr. Shelley, whose object was to put a check on his son's transactions, learnt some days later that Bysshe had arranged for the sale of a *post obit* of £10,000 for a sum of £3000.

Sir Bysshe died on January 5, 1815, and on the following day Whitton wrote to inform Amory, Shelley's then solicitor, of this event, and begged him to prevent "the young gentleman going to his father's at present . . . his presence will, as I understand, be most painful to Mrs. S." Shelley went off to Sussex on learning of his grandfather's death. He was accompanied by Clare Clairmont; perhaps Mary would have taken her place had she been well enough. On presenting himself at Field Place Bysshe was refused admittance by his father—now Sir Timothy Shelley. Whereupon the poet seated himself on the doorstep

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and read *Comus* out of Mary's copy of Milton. Presently Dr. Blocksome came out of the house and told Bysshe that his father was very angry with him. He looked at the book in Bysshe's hands, and observed Mary's name in it. Bysshe learnt, perhaps from the doctor, that the will had been opened, and that he was referred to Whitton.

Sir Bysshe was buried on Tuesday, January 18, in the family vault at Horsham, and, as the notice contributed by Whitton<sup>1</sup> to a Sussex newspaper says: "The corpse was followed by the present Sir Timothy Shelley, Bart., who hath succeeded to the family estates of the Shelleys and Mitchells [*sic*], and by John Shelley Sidney of Penshurst Place, Kent, Esqre., the deceased['s] eldest son by his Second Marriage, and by Major Shelley, the third Son, and a numerous and respectable Tenantry." His grandson Bysshe does not appear to have attended the funeral, as he returned to London on January 13;<sup>2</sup> there is, however, no entry printed from Mary's diary between that date and January 24. Bysshe had some years previously told Miss Hitchener that he had no

<sup>1</sup> Who sent it to the editor with a two-pound note.

<sup>2</sup> Whitton wrote in his business diary on Jan. 13, 1815, the date of Shelley's return to London: "Attended Mr. P. B. Shelley on the death of his Grandfather and the result of his visit to Field Place, and I communicated generally the import of the Will and Codicils and promised that as soon as possible after the interment of Sir Bysshe he should receive all the information in my power to give him."

## The Death of Harriet

intention of attending his grandfather's funeral when he should die.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Bysshe's residuary personal estate was sworn under £175,000. His daughter, Mrs. Aickin, who by her marriage with Captain Aickin is said to have displeased Sir Bysshe, only received an annuity of £52, 10s. and a legacy of £100. Mr. John Shelley-Sidney, however, sympathising with his half-sister in her disappointment, arranged to pay her a yearly sum of £100.

Sir Bysshe by his Will dated 28 Nov. 1805 (after reciting the Settlement of 20 August 1791) devised his real Estates to Trustees (Du Cane and Wm. Whitton) Upon trust to settle the same to the use of Timothy for life without power to commit waste with remainder To the use of Percy Bysshe Shelley for life with remainder To the use of the first and every other son of Percy Bysshe Shelley in tail male And in default of such male issue To the use of the second son of Timothy (who was John) for life with remainder To the use of the first and every son of John in tail male. And he also bequeathed one half of his Residuary personal Estate to his trustees upon trust to convert the same into money and to invest the proceeds in the purchase of Freehold or copyhold land in England and to settle the same To the uses declared by his Will of his

<sup>1</sup> See p. 15.

## Shelley in England

real Estates thereby devised—He directed that in the Settlement to be made as aforesaid there should be contained clauses for barring the Entail on the Estates comprised in the Settlement of 20 August 1791, and for resettling the same Estates To the uses declared by his own Will and that in case any person being Tenant for life or in tail in such Estates should refuse or neglect for one year to concur in barring the Entail, then the uses directed to be limited in the Estates devised by his Will to such person, should cease and become void and that such Estates should go to the next person in succession under the Will—He also directed that in the Settlement to be made there should be contained provisoes for the person in possession to take the name and bear the Arms of Shelley and in default to forfeit his interest And he declared that his Trustees were not to lay out the residue of his Estate in the purchase of lands unless Consols were at 70—He directed his remains to be decently buried either at Penshurst or Horsham, that was to say, at such of those places as he should be nearest unto at the time of his death.

By a fifth Codicil to his Will dated 29 October 1811,<sup>1</sup> Sir Bysshe, after reciting the Settlement of 30 April 1782, in effect directed that all persons who

<sup>1</sup> 1811, the year of Shelley's expulsion from Oxford, his marriage to Harriet, and his quarrel with his father.

## The Death of Harriet

should become entitled to an Estate for life or in tail in the Estates comprised in the Settlement of 1782 should resettle such Estates or in default should forfeit all benefit under his Will.

Similar conditions had been imposed by previous wills of the Shelleys, so that Sir Bysshe was following a precedent in his family.

The Settlement of 1782 comprised the Michell Estates in Sussex which formerly belonged to Mary Catherine Michell (the first wife of Sir Bysshe), whilst the Settlement of 1791 comprised the Estates devised by the Will of Edward Shelley of Field Place, who died 1747-8, and resettled by Sir Bysshe and Timothy in 1791.

But at the dates of the Will and Codicils of Sir Bysshe there were other Estates in Sussex of the annual value of £800 to which under the Will of John Shelley of Field Place, who died in 1790, his brother Sir Bysshe was entitled for life, with remainder to the latter's son Timothy for life, with remainder to Percy Bysshe in tail male. Apparently by some oversight Sir Bysshe did not by his Will or any Codicil make any provision for the resettling of this property.

On January 20 Shelley received a copy of Sir Bysshe's will and codicils from Whitton, who stated that Sir Timothy was "ready to concur in all necessary acts for re-settling the estates comprised in the Settlements of 1782 and 1791 according to the directions" in his

## Shelley in England

grandfather's will and codicils. Sir Timothy was anxious that Bysshe should be given time to consider whether he would take an interest under his grandfather's will by performing the necessary acts.

Bysshe, however, refused to comply with the conditions of his grandfather's will, and by a Deed-Poll formally renounced all interest under such will, and he agreed to sell to his father his reversionary interest under the will of John Shelley in consideration of his father paying him the sum of £7400 and covenanting to pay him an annuity of £1000 during their joint lives.<sup>1</sup>

When this arrangement was complete, Shelley at once sent Harriet a sum of £200 wherewith to liquidate her debts, and gave instructions for his father's banker to pay her in quarterly instalments a sum of £200 a year. This amount, with a like sum which Mr. Westbrook allowed his daughter, provided Harriet with an income of £400 per annum.

Shelley was now in a position of comfort, and after the experience of many months in London lodgings he was able to leave town for Devonshire. In June he was at Torquay, and a month later, while he was looking for a suitable house, Mary was staying at Clifton. Mary had given birth in February to a seven-months' girl, who survived only a few days. The

<sup>1</sup> These transactions were carried out by three deeds, short abstracts of which will be found in the Appendix.

## The Death of Harriet

loss of her baby and her impaired health had given Shelley some anxious weeks. This quiet sojourn, however, restored her, and by August she was settled with Shelley in a furnished house at Bishopgate, near the eastern entrance of Windsor Park, where they remained till the spring of 1816, and where, on January 24 of that year, their son William was born.

Peacock, who was living at Great Marlow, frequently walked over to Bishopgate to see Shelley, and at the end of August he, Shelley, Mary, and Charles Clairmont made a ten days' excursion on the Thames from Windsor to Lechlade in Gloucestershire. They went a little higher, but did not get much beyond Inglesham on account of the water-weeds. Shelley wanted to go on, and to traverse various rivers and canals until they reached the Falls of the Clyde, a distance of two thousand miles; but the idea was given up when it was ascertained that a sum of £20 would be required for the privilege of passing the Severn Canal. Clairmont, who wrote an account of the excursion in a letter to his sister Clare, tells us that they stayed at Oxford from seven in the evening till four o'clock the next afternoon. After seeing the Bodleian Library and the Clarendon Press, they visited, he said, "the very rooms where the two noted infidels, Shelley and Hogg (now, happily, excluded the society of the present residents), pored, with the incessant and un-

## Shelley in England

\ wearied application of the alchymist, over the certified and natural boundaries of human knowledge." Clairmont added : " We have all felt the good effects of this jaunt, but in Shelley the change is quite remarkable ; he has now the ruddy, healthy complexion of the autumn upon his countenance, and he is twice as fat as he used to be."

The journal kept by Shelley and Mary has been lost from May 14, 1815, for a year onwards. It would no doubt have told us, what we now learn from the following letter, that Harriet had applied to Shelley for an allowance for the keep of the two children in addition to the sum which he had arranged to pay for her support. He refused to comply with this request, which probably aroused his misgivings that, as Harriet had found her income insufficient, the children may have gone on short commons. He therefore told her that he was willing—nay, desirous—of having Ianthe with him, and that he would support and care for her. Harriet would not consent to part with her little girl, excusing herself on the ground of Shelley's religious principles, nor would she agree to be a party in a deed of separation. Shelley then declared that, unless she delivered up the child, he should withdraw his promised allowance for her maintenance. At this stage the Westbrooks meditated taking proceedings against Shelley in the courts for alimony on Harriet's

## The Death of Harriet

account, and for a separate allowance for the children's support. Shelley's suggestion that his father should help to support the children apparently met with a refusal.

*W. Whitton to Sir Timothy Shelley*

GRAY'S INN,

30 Nov. 1815.

DEAR SIR TIMOTHY,—I yesterday had a visit from Mr. Desse and Mr. Westbrook, who stated much of their treaty for a Settlement by Mr. P. B. Shelley for the maintenance of his children in addition to that made for his wife without effect, and that Mr. Shelley requested that his daughter should be delivered to him which the mother had refused to do, that they meditated proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Court for Alimony for the wife and in the Court of Chancery for maintenance for the children, in which proceedings the religious principles of Mr. Shelley would be stated as the ground or reason for refusing to give him the care of the children, and under such circumstances the visit to me was to enquire whether to prevent a publick statement of the situation of Mr. Shelley you would take on yourself the support, that is, to allow for the support of one of the children if Mr. Westbrook provided for the other, and if Mrs. Shelley should be content with the £200 a year. I told them that I would mention the subject to you, but I felt confident you would not interfere with Mr. Shelley farther than you had done in respect to any allowance. Indeed, I know that the plan proposed by them would not be satisfactory, because I have been informed by Mr.

## Shelley in England

Longdill that as Mrs. Shelley's friends advise her not to enter into any deed of separation and not to give him the care of his daughter, it is his intention to withdraw the allowance of £200 a year which we had agreed to make for Mrs. Shelley, so that confusion will soon follow in their affairs and I fear that if you allow yourself to be mingled in the strife and to take the conduct that is suggested you will undergo continual anxiety and pain. It is not the money but the Company in which you may be placed, and more, much more, may be expected from you should you do as is requested than would be pleasant to your feelings, and Mr. P. B. Shelley would consider you looking to his persecutors rather than to him, a situation that it is most desirable for you to avoid lest a great change should take place in his conduct and principles and he should be in a situation to receive your protection. You know what reply I am to give.

It was mentioned to me yesterday that Mr. P. B. Shelley was exhibiting himself on the Windsor Stage in the Character of Shakespeare's plays under the figured name of Cooks. I believe that fact is so, and I know of no way correcting such a purpose and bringing himself and his conduct in life and principles before the publick than measures of communication with the principal of the Company, whose name, I believe, is Penley, and whom I know a little of from his visiting Camberwell parish annually with his company. Can I do anything for you about this?—I am, &c.,

WILLIAM WHITTON.

SIR T. SHELLEY, Bt.,  
Field Place,  
Horsham, Sussex.

## The Death of Harriet

If Whitton is correct in his statement that Shelley had acted in Shakespeare's plays at the Windsor Theatre, it is strange that both Peacock and Hogg, who were much in his company at this time, have forborne to mention it. Had they heard of such an interesting episode in their friend's life, it is unlikely that they would have forgotten to describe him as an actor. Whitton, on the other hand, was not the sort of man to retail idle gossip, and it is possible that Shelley may have kept the matter to himself. Whitton, who at that date and for some years previously had resided at Camberwell on a small estate which he had purchased in 1812 from the well-known Dr. Lettsom, speaks with some knowledge of Penley, and he was no doubt sure of his facts.<sup>1</sup>

In his diary, under the date of December 1, Whitton stated that he had had some conversation with Shelley's solicitor, Mr. Longdill, in regard to his client's appearance on the stage, as well as on the communication made to him by Mr. Westbrook and his solicitor, Mr. Desse. Whitton used his best endeavours to avert the meditated proceedings in the courts, and he suggested that the children should be placed in the care

<sup>1</sup> Blanche in his book *Ye Parish of Camberwell*, 1877, says: "The Peckham Theatre was at one time an institution in the Village, for the spirited Proprietor, Mr. Penley of Drury Lane notoriety, generally presented an attractive bill of fare, and residents of to-day speak in terms of high praise of the performers."

## Shelley in England

of some person approved of by Desse and Longdill, and that Shelley should make a proper allowance for their support. "This subject," he said, "caused a general consideration of Mr. Shelley's situation, in particular his connection with the Theatre at Windsor, and Mr. Longdill urged that he might have communication with Sir Timothy." Mr. Whitton continued his efforts to assist at an amicable settlement between Shelley and Harriet, and on February 15, 1816, he informed Sir Timothy that he had been negotiating to prevent hostilities between Mr. Desse and Mr. Longdill.

In 1815-16 the Trustees of the Will of Sir Bysshe (Peter Du Cane and William Whitton) filed a Bill in Chancery to have the Will and Codicils established and the trusts thereof carried into execution, and for an injunction to restrain Sir Timothy from cutting timber on the Estates comprised in the Settlements of 1782 and 1791, which timber was stated to be of the value of some thousands of pounds. (Shelley in his letter to Godwin, dated May 3, 1816, said the timber was worth £60,000.) The defendants were Sir Timothy Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Charles Bysshe Shelley (the infant son of Percy Bysshe), and others.

It would appear that in those days it was necessary for an infant to attend personally in court for the purpose of having a guardian assigned to him to defend

## The Death of Harriet

the suit and file an answer. There seems to have been considerable difficulty in getting Bysshe's infant child (then only sixteen months old) brought to the court, for on March 2, 1816, Whitton wrote to Desse: "I have not stated to you I have obtained the attachment and the Order for the Messenger to take the infant into Court, and you will feel that it is my duty to enforce this Order unless Mrs. Shelley will make it unnecessary by bringing the child into Court without further trouble." Possibly Harriet was apprehensive that Shelley might kidnap the child.

The Order for attachment was as follows :

*March 2, 1816.*—Upon Motion this day made unto this Court by Mr. Blackburn of Counsel for the Plaintiffs It was alleged that an Attachment hath issued against the defendant Charles Bysshe Shelley who is an infant for want of his Answer to the Plaintiffs' Bill. It is ordered that the Messenger attending this Court do apprehend the said defendant the infant and bring him to the Bar of this Court to have a guardian assigned him by whom he may answer the Plaintiffs' Bill and defend this suit.

From a letter written by Whitton on March 12th to Teasdale (Nash's solicitor) it appears that the suit in question was not a hostile one. The real object of it appears to have been to get a decision as to whether Timothy could cut timber on the estates comprised in the settlements of 1782 and 1791, and whether

## Shelley in England

Timothy could concur with his son in making any disposition of such estates without incurring a forfeiture of the life estate given to him (Timothy) by Sir Bysshe's will.

The case was argued before Lord Eldon, the Lord Chancellor, and Whitton wrote, on April 23, 1816, to inform Sir Timothy that the Lord Chancellor had given his judgment, which was nearly in the terms which was anticipated would be the result—that the Chancellor was most clearly of opinion that neither Bysshe nor his issue could take any interest under the will of Sir Bysshe, and that they were not entitled to prevent Sir Timothy from cutting the timber, or in any manner interested in the timber when cut. But as Sir Timothy's other son, John, might ultimately become tenant in tail in remainder on Sir Timothy's life, the money derived from the wood was to be invested. Sir Timothy, however, was to receive the interest. The Chancellor also held that Sir Timothy must retain his life estate, and do no act to prevent a re-settlement according to the will. "Thus all arrangement with Mr. P. B. Shelley," said Whitton, "is made impracticable, and he is as I understand greatly disappointed at that part of the decision, for he has some very pressing occasions for money. He was in Court."

Shelley's mental development advanced under the genial sympathy of Mary's influence; she said that

## The Death of Harriet

"he enjoyed several months of comparative health and tranquil happiness." His comparative freedom from money worries had enabled him to give his attention once more to poetry, and, inspired by the scenery of Windsor Forest, he had written, probably by the end of 1815, his poem *Alastor* and the other pieces contained in the volume published under that title. Of this volume he printed at his own expense 250 copies, and he sent a copy to John Murray on January 16, 1816, asking him if he would publish it. On Murray's declining the book, Shelley made arrangements for it to be issued jointly by Baldwin & Co. and Carpenter & Son, and announced to the last-named firm, in his letter of February 6th, that he expected the volume would be ready for publication in the course of a few days.

A copy of *Alastor* probably found its way to Field Place, for on February 27th Sir Timothy wrote to Whitton: "P. B. has published a Poem with some fragments, somewhat in his usual style, not altogether free from former sentiments, and wants to find out one person on earth the Prototype of himself." Sir Timothy was far from being the only unappreciative reader of this little book. Its merits failed to attract the attention either of the reviewers or the public, although these merits were sufficient to establish the author's reputation as a poet not

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unworthy to take his place with Wordsworth and Coleridge.

An exception to the general neglect of *Alastor* is to be found in an article from the pen of Leigh Hunt that appeared in the *Examiner* for December 1, 1816. Although it contained the briefest reference to the poem, and no criticism, it constituted, perhaps, in a few cordial lines, the first public recognition of Shelley's poetical gifts. Under the title of "Young Poets" Hunt spoke of the work of Shelley, John Hamilton Reynolds, and John Keats—"three young writers, who appear to us to promise a considerable addition of strength to the new school. Of the first who came before us, we have, it is true, yet seen only one or two specimens, and these were no sooner sent us than we unfortunately mislaid them; but we shall procure what he has published, and if the rest answer to what we have seen, we shall have no hesitation in announcing him a very striking and original thinker. His name is Percy Bysshe Shelley, and he is the author of a poetical work entitled *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude*." More space was devoted to the two other poets, and specimens of their work were quoted.

In sending a copy of this little book to Southey, Shelley recalled the pleasure that he had derived from the conversation and the kindness he had received from the Lake poet. He pleaded as his excuse for

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having neglected to write, as he had promised, from Ireland, "the disappointment of some youthful hopes, and subsequent misfortunes of a heavier nature."

As soon as the Court of Chancery had decided the questions arising under Sir Bysshe's will, Shelley made preparations for a second visit to the Continent. He had spent some days in London lodgings at Marchmont Street, and just before embarking for France he wrote, on May 3rd, from Dover, to William Godwin to inform him of the state of his concerns. After detailing certain matters concerning money, he spoke of his motives in leaving England, and adding a generous expression of regard for Godwin, said :

"Continually detained in a situation where what I esteem a prejudice does not permit me to live on equal terms with my fellow-beings, I resolved to commit myself to a decided step. Therefore I take Mary to Geneva, where I shall devise some plan of settlement, and only leave her to return to London, and exclusively devote myself to business. I leave England, I know, not, perhaps, for ever. I return, alone, to see no friend, to do no office of friendship, to engage in nothing that can soothe the sentiments of regret almost like remorse which, under such circumstances, everyone feels who quits his native land. I respect you, I think well of you, better perhaps than of any other person whom England contains ; you were the philosopher who first awakened, and who still as a philo-

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sopher to a very great degree regulates my understanding. It is unfortunate for me that the part of your character which is least excellent should have been met by my convictions of what was right to do. But I have been too indignant, I have been unjust to you—forgive me; burn those letters which contain the records of my violence, and believe me that, however what you erroneously call fame and honour separate us, I shall always feel towards you as the most affectionate of friends.”

Godwin had maintained his unfriendly attitude towards Shelley since Mary's elopement, but he was not only willing, but desirous, that Shelley should raise money for him at exorbitant rates on his expectations. Shelley's frequent letters to him at this time, which were entirely restricted to the business of finding money for him, were written in a stiff, formal style such as one might adopt in writing to a stranger, but there is nothing in them to which exception could be taken. Godwin refused to accept Shelley's plea for a reconciliation, and their correspondence continued in the same cold strain.

Shelley and Mary took with them their little boy, William, and Clare Clairmont. They reached Paris by May 8th, and then went over the same route that they had traversed on foot in 1814, through Troyes and as far as Neufchâtel. Here another road was taken, through Dijon, Dôle, Poligny, Champagnolles,

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Les Rousses to Geneva, where they put up at the Hôtel de Sécheron. At the end of May they moved from the hotel to a cottage—the Champagne Chapuis, or Champagne Monte Alègre—some two miles from Geneva, on the border of the Lake, and separated from the water's edge by a small garden. Byron had arrived at Geneva on May 25th, about ten days after Shelley, having left England for the last time on April 25th. He found the attentions of the British tourists so distasteful that he soon moved to the Villa Diodati, near where Shelley was living. The two poets met for the first time on May 27th. Shelley had sent a copy of *Queen Mab*, with a letter, to Byron, who received the book without the letter, and expressed warm admiration for the opening lines of the poem.

Shelley had departed from England without informing Whitton. He wrote, however, towards the end of May, to Longdill requesting him to suggest through Whitton that his father should increase his income by £500 a year. Mr. Whitton wrote on May 30th to inform Sir Timothy of this suggestion, and said: "It is scarcely to be believed that a young man could be so inconsiderate." Whitton, who thought Shelley's "departure without the least intimation very wrong," told Sir Timothy he had informed Longdill that he "thought the proposal would justify and in all probability would induce you to say that you would not

## Shelley in England

minge yourself with him in any manner, as it is most evident no liberality on your part can or will influence him to a conduct consistent with his rank in life." The two lawyers agreed that a loan of £2000, which Sir Timothy had promised Bysshe, should stand over till he returned to England. Shelley probably wanted his allowance increased for the support of his two children by Harriet, but he was given to understand that he need not expect Sir Timothy would augment his allowance, so Shelley now wrote, through Longdill, with regard to the promised loan, requesting that any deeds necessary to be executed might be sent to him by a special messenger on account of the length of the journey. He also said that his health was receiving great benefit from the climate. Whitton, in conveying this information to Sir Timothy, remarked: "I cannot learn that Mr. Shelley hath or that he proposes to make any arrangement or allowance for the support or care of his children, and I do not think it desirable for you to involve yourself with securities for or from him, and the rather as the expenses will be considerable, and he may by and by think proper to make observations that would give pain to those who wished to serve him."

Whitton wrote to Longdill stating that Sir Timothy refused to send the deeds to Switzerland for execution, and that he declined to receive from Shelley any

## The Death of Harriet

security or to enter into any pecuniary account during his absence. He added that Sir Timothy had expected his son "would have made out of his present means a suitable provision for the support of his children and not have quitted the country as he hath been informed without making any such provision."<sup>1</sup>

On August 16th Whitton again wrote to Sir Timothy, enclosing a copy of a letter which he had received from Shelley. The letter is not forthcoming, but in sending the copy, Whitton wrote regarding it: "The laboured civility and pretence of return on account of the £400 is too apparent when you recollect the contents of my letter to you." This amount was the half-yearly instalment of Shelley's allowance, which no doubt he thought might be suspended if he delayed his return. On August 29th, Shelley, Mary, Clare, and William departed from Geneva, and arrived at Versailles on September 2nd. After visiting the Palace and gardens they made their way without touching Paris to Havre, and from thence they crossed to Portsmouth, reaching that place on September 7th. Here they parted, Shelley going to London, and afterwards to Marlow on a visit to Peacock, while Mary, Clare, William, and the Swiss nurse Elise went to Bath. On September 16th, Whitton

<sup>1</sup> Mary wrote in her diary on August 2nd, two days before Shelley's twenty-fourth birthday, that he received on that date a letter from Longdill requiring his return to England: "This put us in very bad spirits."

## Shelley in England

announced to Sir Timothy Shelley's return, saying that he had been in town for a few days.

On September 24, 1816, in consideration of the Transfer by Richard Whitton into the name of the poet of £3500 3 per cent. Consolidated Bank Annuities, Shelley mortgaged to Richard Whitton his reversionary interests in the estates comprised in the Settlements of 1782 and 1791. Richard Whitton was a son of William Whitton, and his name was inserted in such mortgage as Trustee for Sir Timothy, to whom the sum of stock in fact belonged. The Transfer of this stock appears to have been substituted for the suggested loan of £2000. Shelley at this date (Sep. 24) was much pressed for money, and it would seem that Whitton advanced him £1700 pending the sale of the stock. In granting the loan, Sir Timothy made an indispensable condition that Shelley should pay all his debts. This arrangement therefore rendered it impossible for him to supply Godwin with a sum of £300 which he had promised him, but he sent, as he said, "within a few pounds, the wrecks of my late negotiation with my father."<sup>1</sup>

On the same day (Sep. 24) Shelley made a will whereby he bequeathed to his trustees, Lord Byron and Thomas Love Peacock, a sum of £6000 upon trust that they should, during the life of his wife, Harriet Shelley, pay

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Godwin, Bath, October 2, 1816.

## The Death of Harriet

the same to Harriet, to the intent that the same might be for her separate use, independently of any husband with whom she might intermarry after his decease. He bequeathed to his executors, Lord Byron and Thomas Love Peacock, £5000 in trust for his son, Charles Bysshe Shelley, to vest and to be paid on his attaining the age of twenty-one. He bequeathed to his trustees £5000 in trust for his daughter, Ianthe Shelley, to vest and be paid on her attaining twenty-one. He bequeathed to Mary Jane Clairmont (sister-in-law of his residuary legatee) £6000, and he also bequeathed unto his trustees the sum of £6000 upon trust to invest the same in the purchase of an annuity for the life of the said Mary Jane Clairmont and the life of such other person as the said Mary Jane Clairmont should name (if she should be pleased to name one), and to pay the said annuity to the said Mary Jane Clairmont during her life, and after her death to pay the said annuity, in case the same should not have run out, to such person as the said Mary Jane Clairmont should by her will appoint. To Thomas Jefferson Hogg of the Inner Temple he bequeathed £2000, and a similar sum to Lord Byron. To T. L. Peacock he gave £500, and to his trustees he bequeathed £2000 upon trust to invest the same in the purchase of an annuity for the life of the said T. L. Peacock, and the life of such other person

## Shelley in England

as he should name (if he should be pleased to name one), upon trust, for the exclusive benefit of the said Thomas Love Peacock in the like manner before directed as to the before-mentioned annuity and for his appointees after his death. The residue of his real and personal estate he devised and bequeathed unto Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, of Skinner Street in the City of London, spinster. He declared that the provision made for his said wife Harriet Shelley should be accepted by her in lieu and satisfaction of all dower which she might be entitled to out of his real estate. He also declared that the legacies therein before given should not be paid until the said Mary W. Godwin should be in possession of his real estate devised to her, and not for four years thereafter, if during such period of four years she should duly pay interest on the said legacies at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum. And he appointed Lord Byron and Peacock his executors.

After Harriet's death, Shelley, on February 18, 1817, executed another will. The sums bequeathed in trust to his executors Byron and Peacock for his children Charles Bysshe and Ianthe were increased to £6000 each, and a similar sum was bequeathed in trust for the benefit of his son William. The residue of his estate was left to his wife. The other bequests, including the bequests of the two sums of £6000 in favour

## The Death of Harriet

of Miss Clairmont, are the same as in the first will. It has been suggested, in some quarters, that the second sum of £6000 to Miss Clairmont was left to her "by an error in drawing up the document," but there does not seem to be the slightest foundation for this suggestion.

Having executed his first will Shelley rejoined Mary at Bath, but shortly after his return, he and Mary received a crushing blow by the death of Fanny Godwin under distressing circumstances. After Mary's departure with Shelley from the Godwin household, Fanny's life had become unendurable owing to Mrs. Godwin's ungovernable temper and malicious tongue. Godwin, who loved the girl as if she had been his own daughter, was so incessantly occupied with his literary work that he was probably not able to spare her much of his time; she was consequently at Mrs. Godwin's mercy, as Clare was seldom at home. Early in October Fanny had suddenly left home, and had travelled through Bath and Bristol to Swansea, ostensibly with the intention of visiting an aunt in Ireland. She did not stop at Bath to see the Shelleys, but she wrote to Mary from Bristol a letter full of such ominous hints that Shelley in alarm immediately set out for that town. He returned, however, to Bath without obtaining any tidings of her, and again went to Bristol on October 10th, but it was not until two days later that he brought Mary

## Shelley in England

the news of her unhappy sister's death. On Fanny's arrival at the Mackworth Arms Inn, Swansea, on the night of October 9th, she had retired to rest, and she was found the next morning lying dead with a laudanum bottle beside her. Shelley's grief at Fanny's death was deep and lasting. He remained at Bath until December 6th, when he came up to town on a visit to Leigh Hunt at Hampstead. After spending a few enjoyable days with his newly-made friend, he went to see Peacock at Marlow, where he succeeded in finding a house in which some weeks later he settled.

On December 14th, Shelley went back to Bath ; he had barely recovered from the shock of Fanny's death, and on the day after his return he received the following letter from Hookham, conveying the news that Harriet was dead :

*T. Hookham, junr., to P. B. Shelley*<sup>1</sup>

OLD BOND STREET,  
Dec. 13, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,—It is nearly a month since I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you, and you have no doubt felt surprised that I did not reply to it sooner. It was my intention to do so, but on enquiry I found the utmost difficulty in obtaining the information you desire relative to Mrs. Shelley and your children.

<sup>1</sup> This letter is from Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, vol. ii. p. 67.

## The Death of Harriet

While I was yet endeavouring to discover Mrs. Shelley's address, information was brought to me that she was dead—that she had destroyed herself. You will believe that I did not credit the report. I called at the house of a friend of Mr. Westbrook ; my doubt led to conviction. I was informed she was taken from the Serpentine river on Tuesday last . . .<sup>1</sup> Little or no information was laid before the jury which sat on the body. She was called Harriet Smith, and the verdict was *found drowned*.<sup>2</sup>

Your children are well, and are both, I believe, in London.

This shocking communication must stand single and alone in the letter which I now address you : I have no inclination to fill it with subjects comparatively trifling : you will judge of my feelings and excuse the brevity of this communication.—Yours very truly,

T. HOOKHAM, JUNR.

There is apparently nothing to show that Shelley had seen Harriet since his return to England, but he was in touch with her during his absence abroad, if not personally, through his solicitor and through Peacock, who had attempted to arrange her affairs. Shelley had, moreover, made a provision for her in his will. As Hookham's letter shows, early in November Shelley had written to him asking for information of Harriet

<sup>1</sup> Professor Dowden states that the words omitted here have no reference to Shelley.

<sup>2</sup> The verdict in fact was "Found Dead."

## Shelley in England

and the children. Hookham, however, had failed to obtain any tidings of her, as she apparently had left her father's house, and about the 9th of September, that is, two days after Shelley's return from the Continent, she had taken lodgings at 7 Elizabeth Street, Hans Place, Chelsea. On November 9th she left the lodgings never to return, and on December 10th her body was taken out of the Serpentine.

The veil that for so many years obscured the last days of Harriet Shelley has been partially lifted by the recent discovery, through the diligence of Mr. Charles Withall, of the official papers relating to the coroner's inquest on her body.<sup>1</sup> The inquest was held by John Henry Gell, the Coroner, at the house of Thomas Phillips, known by the sign of the Fox, Knightsbridge, on Wednesday, December 11, 1816, Harriet Shelley's name being given as that of Harriet Smith. This inn, which seems to have been called the Fox and Bull, formerly stood west of what is now known as Albert Gate, and was for many years the receiving house of the Royal Humane Society. There was an old wooden gate at the back, opening into Hyde Park, and it was through this gate that the bodies of persons drowned in the Serpentine were conveyed. It was said that Harriet was known to the landlord's daughter, Miss Mary Ann Phillips, and for that reason her remains were treated

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for copies of the original documents.

## The Death of Harriet

with especial tenderness, and spared the degrading burial "then awarded to the suicide."<sup>1</sup>

About September 9th, Harriet, accompanied by a Mr. Alder, had taken the second floor in the house of Mrs. Jane Thomas, a widow, at 7 Elizabeth Street, Hans Place, Chelsea.<sup>2</sup> Harriet stated that she was married and that her husband was abroad. She engaged the rooms from month to month, and had been with Mrs. Thomas about nine weeks on November 9th, and on the Thursday preceding that date, she paid her month's rent. Mrs. Thomas stated that Harriet appeared to be enceinte, and that while she lived with her she was very gloomy. Mary Jones, Mrs. Thomas's servant, spoke of Harriet's continual lowness of spirits, that she said very little and chiefly spent her time in bed ; that she saw nothing but what was proper in her conduct. That on Saturday, November 9th, after having breakfasted, Harriet told Mary Jones that she wished to dine early, consequently the meal was prepared for her by about four o'clock ; that she was not, however, occupied with it more than ten minutes. The maid observed that on going into her room at five o'clock Harriet was not there. She had gone out without taking leave of anyone, and was not seen again.

<sup>1</sup> Davis' *Memorials of Knightsbridge*, 1859. I am indebted to Mr. Walter H. Whitear of Chiswick for this interesting reference.

<sup>2</sup> In a deed among the Shelley-Whitton papers dated May 1, 1815, Shelley is described as of Hans Place, Chelsea.

## Shelley in England

William Alder, a plumber, who lodged at the Fox public-house, stated that he knew the deceased. It was he who had accompanied her when she took the apartments at Elizabeth Street. He appears to have been in her confidence, for he knew she was about twenty-one years of age, had been married about five years, and was living apart from her husband. Alder also stated, as he was informed, that Harriet had been missing from her house upwards of a month; that at the request of her parents, after she had been absent about a week, he dragged the Serpentine and all the other ponds near thereto without any result. Alder, like other witnesses, noticed that Harriet had for some time laboured under lowness of spirits, which, he said, he "had observed for several months before," and he "conceived that something lay heavy on her mind." On hearing that a body had been found, Alder went to look at it, and recognised it as the missing woman. The body was discovered by John Levesley of 38 Dannings Alley, Bishopsgate Street Within, an out-pensioner of Chelsea Hospital. About ten o'clock on Tuesday morning, December 10th, as he was walking by the side of the Serpentine on his way to Kensington, he noticed something floating in the water, which he conceived was a human body. He therefore called to a boy on the opposite side of the water to bring over his boat, which he did after some time, to the side on

## The Death of Harriet

which Levesley stood, whereupon he got into the boat and found that the floating object was the dead body of a woman ; he had no doubt that it must have lain in the water for some days.

As there were no marks of violence on the body, and there was an absence of evidence how or by what means the deceased met her death, a verdict was returned of " Found dead in the Serpentine River."

The *Times* of December 12, 1816, the day after the inquest, contains the following :

" On Tuesday [December 10th] a respectable female far advanced in pregnancy was taken out of the Serpentine River and brought home to her residence in Queen Street, Brompton, having been missed for nearly six weeks. She had a valuable ring on her finger. A want of honour in her own conduct is supposed to have led to this fatal catastrophe, her husband being abroad."

The reference to Harriet's condition in this statement is not borne out by the evidence given at the inquest, the only allusion being that of her landlady, whose words were: " She appeared in the family way." From Alder's evidence it is clear that the family were acquainted with Harriet's whereabouts after she had left Chapel Street, but it does not appear whether she had kept them informed of her address or how they became aware of it. Harriet was evi-

## Shelley in England

dently known by the name of Smith at her lodgings, as she was so described at the inquest. If the Westbrooks knew of her death before the inquest, they refrained from disclosing her real name, apparently in order to conceal her identity. Harriet's death could hardly have taken place immediately after she left her lodgings, otherwise her body would scarcely have been recognisable, after being in the water for a month. Where was she living in the meantime?

In an unpublished passage contained in a letter written by Shelley to Mary after the inquest, he said that Harriet had been driven from her father's house by the persecution of her sister, who wished to secure Mr. Westbrook's fortune for herself, and that Harriet, having lived with a groom of the name of Smith, had been deserted by him.<sup>1</sup> If Shelley believed that Harriet had been living with another man, it is more than probable that he concluded that the man's name was Smith.

Perhaps the explanation of her adopting the name of Smith may be gathered from the following entries

<sup>1</sup> It is significant that Thornton Hunt, in his article "Shelley; by one who knew him," *Atlantic Monthly*, Feb. 1863, wrote: "If she left him" [meaning, I suppose, if Harriet was the first to break her union with Shelley, as she undoubtedly was, when she went off to Bath with her little girl in July 1814], "it would appear that she herself was deserted in turn by a man in a very humble grade of life; and it was in consequence of this desertion that she killed herself." Mr. Swinburne in his article on Shelley in *Chambers's Cyclopædia of English Literature*, 1903, vol. iii. p. 107, refers to Harriet as "the wife who had deserted" Shelley:

# The Death of Harriet

under the year 1816 in the register of burials in the parish of Paddington :

Name.	Abode.	When Buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony Performed.
Benjamin Smith. 1380	Mount Street, St. George's, Hanover Square	December 11	54	Jos. Pickering, Perpetual Curate
Harriett Smith. 1383	Mount Street, St. George's, Hanover Square	December 13	21	Jos. Pickering, Perpetual Curate

That the second of these entries relates to Harriet Shelley there can be but little doubt. She was accustomed at times to spell her name with the double *t*,<sup>1</sup> she was twenty-one at the date of her death, and Mount Street was close to her father's residence and in the neighbourhood of *The Mount* coffee-house, where he had made his fortune. Perhaps Benjamin Smith, who is described as a shopkeeper or painter and glazier of 61 Mount Street,<sup>2</sup> was an old acquaint-

<sup>1</sup> She was christened "Harriet," but Shelley in his letter to Medwin, October 21, 1811, wrote: "The maiden name is Harriett Westbrook, with two *t*'s—Harriett."

<sup>2</sup> In Johnstone's *Commercial Directory* corrected to August 31, 1817, the name of Benjamin Smith does not appear. In Johnstone's *Triennial Directory* for 1817, 1818, 1819, and again for 1822, 1823, 1824, the name of Benjamin Smith of Mount Street, Shopkeeper, appears, but the number of the house is not there stated. Perhaps Smith's business was carried on after his death, his name being retained.

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ance of the Westbrooks, and he may have received her into his family after she had left her lodgings. It is inconceivable, if the relations between Harriet and Smith had been such as Shelley believed, that she should have gone to live practically next door to her father's house. Benjamin Smith, moreover, was thirty-three years Harriet's senior, and she was not destitute.

Harriet Shelley's place of burial has not hitherto been revealed. Mr. Whitton's successor, Mr. Gregson, according to his diary for 1856, was unable to ascertain where she was interred, although inquiries were made of Hookham and Miss Clairmont. The following reference, however (which had evidently escaped the notice of Mr. Gregson), contained in a letter, dated July 8, 1823, from Mr. Powell (the solicitor to Shelley's executors) to Mr. Whitton, "Mrs. Shelley was buried, I understand, at Paddington," led to a search being made there recently in the name of Harriet Smith. The place of burial of a person living at Hans Place would have been at St. Luke's, Chelsea, and at Mount Street, in the parish of St. George, Hanover Square, in the burial-ground at the back of Mount Street. It was not unusual for persons to be buried outside their parishes, and perhaps the Westbrooks may have wished that Harriet's funeral should not take place in the burial-ground so near to their house.

## The Death of Harriet

On making inquiries at Paddington, Mr. Charles Withall was informed that, when it was proposed to convert the churchyard into a recreation ground, the local authorities had a plan made showing the position of the various graves, and they kept a record of such inscriptions as were decipherable on the tombstones. In this record there is no entry of "Harriett Smith," but there is an entry of a flat stone, bearing the name HARRIETT, the remainder of the inscription being entirely obliterated. The position of this grave is in the north portion of the churchyard on the east side, and second from the grave, in a northerly direction, of a person of the name of Holloway, whose gravestone is still visible. On converting the churchyard the representatives of Holloway claimed to retain the stone of his grave *in situ*; the unclaimed tombstones (and Harriet's was one of these) were buried three feet below their original positions. The register of graves belonging to the church is missing.

The idea of suicide with Harriet must have been an obsession: she had contemplated it since her school-days as a solution to her troubles, and later she seems to have discussed it as a means of escape from the weariness of life. In a letter from Shelley to Miss Hitchener, written in October 1811, when referring to the causes that led to his marriage with Harriet, he said: "Suicide was with her a favourite theme."

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Hogg also especially noticed how her mind continually ran on self-destruction. It is not surprising, then, in the circumstances in which she found herself during the early days of December 1816, that she should have taken her life. The Serpentine would have been familiar to her owing to its proximity to her lodgings at Chelsea.

Shelley went to London on the same day that the news of Harriet's death reached him, to claim his children, who were in the keeping of the Westbrooks. He wrote to Mary on the following day, saying that he had "spent a day of somewhat agonizing sensations, such as the contemplation of vice and folly and hard-heartedness, exceeding all conception, must produce. Leigh Hunt has been with me all day, and his delicate attentions to me, his kind speeches of you, have sustained me against the weight of the horror of this event. . . . It is through you that I can entertain without despair the recollections of the horrors of unutterable villany that led to this dark, dreadful death." Shelley's allusion to hard-heartedness was evidently directed to Eliza Westbrook.

Leigh Hunt, who should have been in a position to speak of the effect of Harriet's death on Shelley, said that "it was a heavy blow to him, and he never forgot it. For a time, it tore his being to pieces: nor is there any doubt that, however deeply he was accus-

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tomed to reason on the nature and causes of evil, and on the steps necessary to be taken for opposing it, he was not without remorse for having no better exercised his judgment with regard to the degree of intellect he had allied himself with and for having given rise to a premature independence of conduct in one unequal to the task." In other words, Shelley admitted that, in having married Harriet, he had made a grave mistake, and a mistake, moreover, which proved to be the source of tragedy and endless misfortune.

Shelley did not regard himself as responsible for his wife's tragic end. In writing to Southey some years later, who had called him to account for this tragedy, he said : " I take God to witness, if such a Being is now regarding both you and me, and I pledge myself, if we meet, as perhaps you expect, before Him after death, to repeat the same in His presence—that you accuse me wrongfully. I am innocent of ill, either done or intended ; the consequences you allude to flowed in no respect from me. If you were my friend I could tell you a history that would make you open your eyes ; but I shall certainly never make the public my familiar confidant." <sup>1</sup> Shelley had made for Harriet a provision which, with the allowance from her father, amounted to £400 per annum. Even if she had not

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to R. Southey, August 20, 1820.

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lived with her two children at Mr. Westbrook's house, this sum should have been adequate. Shelley was told by Godwin in January 1817 that he had evidence of Harriet's unfaithfulness to him four months before he eloped with Mary Godwin, but one ought not to place much reliance on Godwin's testimony, as he was an interested witness. Harriet had her advocates in Peacock, Hookham, and Thornton Hunt. All believed that she was not unfaithful to Shelley before he eloped with Mary Godwin, and they have as much right to be heard as Godwin.<sup>1</sup> In later years many have pleaded Harriet's cause, but none with such simple eloquence as Mr. William Watson in his couplets :

"A star looked down from heaven and loved a flower  
Grown in earth's garden—loved it for an hour :  
Let eyes which trace his orbit in the spheres  
Refuse not, to a ruined rosebud, tears."

<sup>1</sup> Trelawny in his *Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author*, 1878, vol. i. p. 15, wrote: "I was assured by the evidence of the few friends who knew both Shelley and his wife—Hookham, who kept the great library in Bond Street, Jefferson Hogg, Peacock, and one of the Godwins—that Harriet was perfectly innocent of all offence."

## CHAPTER XVI

### MARLOW

Shelley's second marriage—The Chancery case—Guardians for the children—Charles Bysshe Shelley goes to school—His death—Ianthe Shelley—John Westbrook's death and will—Shelley's life at Marlow—*Laon and Cythna*—Clare Clairmont—Godwin's debts—Shelley arrested for debt—"The Hermit of Marlow" pamphlets—The Shelleys depart from Marlow—Christening the children—Leaving-taking in London.

SHELLEY not only failed to obtain possession of his children, but he anticipated the possibility of the Westbrooks contesting his claim for them. He wrote <sup>1</sup> to Mary: "If they should dare to bring it before Chancery, a scene of such fearful horror would be unfolded as would cover them with scorn and shame." Shelley was told by his solicitor that all pretence to detain the children would cease in the event of his marriage to Mary Godwin, but the marriage was hastened by other causes.

Notwithstanding that Godwin had formerly expressed an abhorrence of marriage vows, he had himself married Mary Wollstonecraft, and after her death he had gone through the ceremony, for a second time, with Mrs. Clairmont. He did not disguise his desire

<sup>1</sup> Shelley to Mary, Dec. 16, 1816.

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that his daughter Mary should marry Shelley, now that he was free, and he wished that the ceremony should take place without delay. Mary acquiesced, realising that until she was married she could not hope for, what she earnestly desired, a reconciliation with her father. Clare Clairmont stated that the question whether the marriage of Shelley should take place at once or be delayed was put before Sir Lumley Skeffington, to whom, without mentioning any names, the circumstances were explained. Sir Lumley, who advised them to marry at once, had enjoyed, at one time, notoriety as a leader of fashion, but his advice was sought, perhaps, because he was both a man of the world and a man of honour.

The marriage, therefore, was hurried on, and it took place on December 30th by licence<sup>1</sup> at St. Mildred's Church, Bread Street, a London street which is also identified with England's other great republican poet, Milton, who was born there in 1608. The morning of the day before the ceremony was spent by Shelley and Mary at the Hunts', and the evening was passed by them, 'not unpleasantly,' at Skinner Street with the Godwins. The Godwins' hospitality to the bridal pair included breakfast before they started for the church, also dinner and supper after their return. Godwin was undoubtedly gratified by the marriage,

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the licence will be found in the Appendix.

## Marlow

and he recorded the event in his diary with something less than even his accustomed brevity: "Call at Mildred w[ith] P. B. S., M. W. G., and M. J."

The following is the entry in the church register :

Percy Bysshe Shelley, of the Parish of Saint Mildred Bread Street London Widower and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin of the City of Bath Spinster a Minor, were married in this Church by Licence, with the consent of William Godwin her Father this Thirtieth Day of December in the Year One thousand eight hundred and Sixteen.

By me Wm. Heydon, *Curate*.

This Marriage was solemnized { Percy Bysshe Shelley.  
between us { Mary Wollstonecraft  
Godwin.

In the Presence of { William Godwin.  
{ M. J. Godwin.

After the ceremony Shelley wrote to Clare, who was at Bath, saying that he should return to that place with Mary on January 1, 1817. He told her that "The Ceremony, so magical, was undergone this morning at St. Mildred's church in the City. Mrs. G. and G. were both present, and appeared to feel no little satisfaction. Indeed Godwin throughout has shown the most polished and courteous attentions to me and Mary. He seems to think no kindness too great in compensation for what has passed. I confess I am not entirely

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deceived by this, though I cannot make my vanity wholly insensible to certain attentions paid in a manner studiously flattering. Mrs. G. presents herself to me in her real attributes of affectation, prejudice, and heartless pride. Towards her, I confess I never feel an emotion of anything but antipathy. Her sweet daughter [that is, Clare] is very dear to me."

Shelley had now made repeated demands to the Westbrooks, for his children, without avail. The result of these applications was that the Westbrooks at once took steps to make the children wards of Court. As a preliminary step, on January 2, 1817, John Westbrook executed a settlement of £2000 four per cent. annuities in favour of Harriet's children, Eliza Ianthe and Charles Bysshe. The parties to the settlement were John Westbrook of the first part, the infant children of the second part, and Elizabeth Westbrook and John Higham of Grosvenor Street of the third part.

On January 10th the infants, by John Westbrook (their next friend), filed a Bill in Chancery against Elizabeth Westbrook and John Higham (the trustees of the settlement), Percy Bysshe Shelley (their father), Sir Timothy Shelley (their paternal grandfather), and John Westbrook (their maternal grandfather), praying that the Court might appoint John Westbrook and Eliza Westbrook, or some other proper

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persons, to act as their guardians, and that their father might be restrained from taking possession of their persons.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Whitton conveyed this information to Sir Timothy in a letter dated January 17, 1817, in which he wrote :

“ I had wished to have spared you all consideration of the concerns of Mr. P. B. Shelley, but as Mr. Westbrook hath filed a Bill against him to restrain him from taking the custody of the children and that a guardian may be appointed to them on the ground of Mr. P. B. Shelley's tenets, I do not think myself justified in withholding that information, as the subject will be heard on Tuesday morning in his Lordship's private room in the hope that the ground of the application may not be made publick. To support this application the publication of *Queen Mab*, and a printed letter addressed to Lord Ellenborough in justification of Daniel Isaac Eaton who was lately convicted of publishing blasphemous works deriding the Christian religion are produced. They have also

<sup>1</sup> Among the Shelley-Whitton papers there are the following documents relating to the Shelley and Westbrook case : Public Record copies of the Bill of Complaint (Jan. 8, 1817) ; Answer of P. B. Shelley (Jan. 18, 1817) ; Answer of John Westbrook (Jan. 18, 1817) ; Master's Report (April 28, 1818) ; Second affidavit of Elizabeth Westbrook (Jan. 13, 1817) ; Affidavit of P. W. Longdill (May 24, 1821) ; also contemporary office copies of Elizabeth Westbrook's affidavit (Jan. 10, 1817) ; and affidavit of John Westbrook and Mr. Morphett (Feb. 24, 1818) ; Order for messenger to bring Shelley's infant son into court (Mar. 2, 1815) ; Copy order directing Sir Timothy, out of the annual sum of £1000 payable by him to his son, to pay £120 per annum to Mr. Hume, and also certain arrears due to him (April 19, 1821).

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exhibited several letters written to the late Mrs. Shelley—all tending to show his, Mr. P. B. Shelley's, total unfitness for the care he seeks. These documents are so introduced as not to put them before the public, but whether their tendency shall be preserved in the breast of the few who are professionally concerned I know not. I have endeavoured to awaken Mr. Shelley through Mr. Longdill to the perils of his present conduct: for I understand it is intended that he should oppose the application of Mr. Westbrook, which will necessarily lead to an exposure of his unworthy thoughts and actions, and I know not what a Court of Justice may be induced to the author of so much unjustifiable matter as is stated throughout the pages of his books. What effect remonstrances or rather the observations I have made will have I know not; but most certain am I that the Lord Chancellor will not allow him to have the care of or communication with his own children. He says that it is merely from a feeling of resentment that this measure is taken, and that Mr. Westbrook and his daughter are equally unfit with himself to have the care of infants from the turpitude of their own conduct. I think that Miss Westbrook is unworthy and Mr. Westbrook is unequal to the care whatever his will may be. In these circumstances a stranger must be resorted to, and I can easily conceive that the Lord Chancellor will look to you as the superintending protector of these little unoffending creatures. Can you be in town, or will you furnish me with your sentiments? Mr. Westbrook has settled £2000 £4 p.c. on the children in order to bring them within the protection of the Court. Any sum, however small, would have been sufficient."

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Whitton's statement covers the chief points in the Bill of Complaint. The Bill relates, however, that while Harriet was expecting the birth of her son Charles, "Shelley became acquainted with a Mr. Godwin, the author of a work called *Political Justice*, and with Mary his daughter, and that the said Percy Bysshe Shelley about three years ago deserted his said wife and unlawfully cohabited with the said Mary Godwin," and that Harriet thereupon returned with Ianthe to her father's house, where she afterwards gave birth to Charles Bysshe, and that the children had since continued and were then in the custody of John Westbrook and his daughter Eliza, and that since Harriet was deserted by her husband "until a short time previously to the time of her death she lived with the said John Westbrook her father and that in the month of December she died." It also stated that Shelley had lived, since he deserted his wife, "with the said Mary Godwin and is now unlawfully cohabiting with her and has had several illegitimate children by her." That Sir Timothy Shelley did, in the year 1815, concur with the said Percy Bysshe Shelley in making a settlement of certain estates whereby the said Percy Bysshe Shelley became and was then entitled to a yearly charge or annuity of £1000, subject to the payment thereout of the yearly sum of £200 to Harriet, and that Sir Timothy had contracted to make some

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provision for the children, who, while they lived with Mr. Westbrook, were supported partly by him and partly by their mother. That since the death of Harriet, Shelley had demanded the children, and should they be delivered up to him he intended to educate them as he thought proper.

Eliza Westbrook in her first affidavit (dated January 10, 1817) swore that she was well acquainted with the handwriting of Percy Bysshe Shelley, having seen him frequently write, and she identified certain specified letters<sup>1</sup> as being in Shelley's handwriting and addressed to her sister Harriet, his late wife; and she stated that the female mentioned in the letters under the designation of "Mary" was Mary Godwin, with whom Shelley in the lifetime of his wife and about the middle of the year 1814 took to cohabit with him, and had ever since continued to cohabit, and still did cohabit, with him. Eliza also swore that another specified letter was in the handwriting of Shelley, and was addressed by him to the defendant, Eliza Westbrook, after the decease of her sister, the late wife of the defendant, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and that the person referred to in this letter as "the Lady whose union with the said defendant this Deponent might excusably

<sup>1</sup> These letters, nine in number, have unfortunately disappeared. It is not the practice of the courts to file exhibits, consequently copies of them are not to be found at the Record Office. The originals would have remained with the Westbrooks' solicitors.

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regard as the cause of her sister's ruin " was also the said Mary Godwin. She also swore that the copy of *Queen Mab* with the subjoined notes and *A Letter to Lord Ellenborough* were written and published by Shelley, she having frequently seen the manuscript of such respective books in the handwriting of the said defendant, and having repeatedly seen him engaged in writing the same, and that these books then produced were presented by the defendant to his late wife, and that since her death she had received several applications from the said defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley, and from Mr. Leigh Hunt on his behalf, demanding the infant plaintiffs to be delivered to the said defendant, Percy Bysshe Shelley.

In Eliza Westbrook's second affidavit (dated January 13, 1817) she swore that Shelley had married Harriet in August 1811, and that after the birth of Eliza Ianthe, and while Harriet was pregnant with Charles Bysshe, Shelley deserted his wife, and, as she [Eliza] "hath been informed and verily believes," unlawfully cohabited with Mary Godwin. That thereupon the said Harriet had returned to the house of her father, John Westbrook, with Eliza Ianthe, where soon afterwards she gave birth to Charles Bysshe. That the children continued and were at the date of the affidavit in the care and protection of John Westbrook. That Harriet had remained at the house of

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her father and in his protection from the time of her desertion "until a short time previously to her death . . . and that in the month of December last she died." She also swore that while the children lived at their grandfather's they were partly supported by their mother and partly by Mr. Westbrook, who, in order to make some provision for them, had transferred the sum of £2000 four per cent. bank annuities into the names of her, the said Eliza Westbrook, and of John Higham, upon the trusts contained in the said indenture of January 2, 1817. In the sworn answer (dated January 8, 1817) of Eliza Westbrook and John Higham they said that they were ready and willing to transfer the stock into court. In John Westbrook's sworn answer he admitted that he had transferred the above-named sum into the names of Eliza Westbrook and John Higham, that he claimed the interest in the said bank annuities by virtue of the trusts of the said indenture, and denied any unlawful combination and confederacy with the complainants in the Bill of Complaint.

Shelley's sworn answer is dated January 18, 1817. He stated that after the birth of Eliza Ianthe Shelley he and Harriet "agreed, in consequence of certain differences between them, to live separate and apart from each other," but he denied that he deserted his late wife "otherwise than by separating from her as

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aforesaid." He admitted that after the separation Harriet returned to her father's house with Eliza Ianthe Shelley, and that Charles Bysshe Shelley was afterwards born as stated in the Bill of Complaint, that at Harriet's urgent entreaty he permitted the children "to reside with her under her management and protection after her separation," although "he was very anxious from his affection for his children to have them under his care and management during his said wife's life but that he forbore so to do in compliance with the wishes of his wife and on account of their tender age, intending nevertheless to have them under his own care and to provide for their education himself as soon as they should be of a proper age or in case of the death of his said wife, never having in any manner abandoned or deserted them or had any intention of so doing. That if the children were then in the care of Eliza and John Westbrook they were so against his consent, and that they had been clandestinely placed in some place unknown to him, without his being able to find them or have access to them, and that since the death of his wife he had frequently applied to the said Elizabeth and John Westbrook and requested to have his children delivered up to him, and that they refused to deliver them up or to inform him where they were. He denied that he was unlawfully cohabiting with Mary Godwin,

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whom he had married since Harriet's death, and he denied that Sir Timothy Shelley in the year 1815 concurred with him in making a settlement to the purport and effect in the said Bill of Complaint. That up to the month of June 1815 he had been in receipt from his father of an allowance of £200 per annum only, and that, in consequence, he had become indebted to certain persons in large sums of money amounting altogether to upwards of £5000, and that being pressed for payment and being totally unable to pay the sum he had applied to Sir Timothy, who by arrangement with him had advanced in June 1815 a considerable sum of money towards the payment of his debts and had secured to him an annuity of £1000 during the joint lives of himself and his father, by way of rent charges out of certain estates belonging to Sir Timothy. That although the children may have been supported partly by their mother and partly by John Westbrook, he (Shelley) had, on his father assisting him with money and increasing his allowance to £1000 a year, 'immediately' written to Sir Timothy and requested him to give directions to his bankers to pay to the order of the said Harriet Shelley the annual sum of £200 in quarterly payments out of his allowance, which was accordingly done: that the first instalment had been paid in June 1815, and that in the same month of June 1815, he had sent Harriet

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the full sum of £200 with which to discharge her debts. That this allowance to his wife was regularly paid to Harriet to the time of her death. That if he got possession of the children he should educate them as he thought proper, which he intended to do 'virtuously' and properly, and to provide for their support and maintenance in a manner suitable to their birth and prospects in the world, and to the best of his judgment and ability; that he humbly submitted and insisted that being their father he was the natural guardian of his children, and that it was his duty to provide for their maintenance and education. That in order to make provision for the children sufficient to enable the said John Westbrook to contest his just right as the father and natural guardian of the children, but not further and as he believed for no other purpose, the said John Westbrook might have transferred the sum of £2000 bank annuities to Eliza Westbrook, John Higham and another mentioned in the Bill of Complaint for the benefit of such children, that his children were of such tender age that they could not from any reasonable ground of objection on their part be desirous that they should not be placed in his custody, not being of sufficient age, as he submitted and insisted, to judge for themselves either as to that or any other circumstances that could affect their future prospects or welfare in life. And he humbly submitted and

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insisted that he was exclusively entitled to their custody and care, and that he ought not to be deprived thereof or to have his just rights as their father and natural guardian taken from him or abridged, and that they ought to be delivered up to him."

Sir Samuel Romilly, one of the leading members of the Chancery bar, was engaged for the Westbrooks. Charles Wetherell was Shelley's leading counsel, and he was supported by Basil Montagu and Mr. Bell, none of whom, unfortunately for Shelley, were so skilled as Romilly for eloquence and experience. Wetherell, who subsequently defended successfully James Watson in a high-treason case, was knighted some years later. Montagu was the learned editor of Bacon and the friend of Godwin and Charles Lamb, but he was no match for Romilly.

Reporters were not admitted to the court, but a short account of the proceedings appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, probably from hearsay.

Mr. Wetherell's brief, which was prepared by Longdill, contains the following observations on the Bill of Complaint.<sup>1</sup> Little, it was admitted, could be said in defence of *Queen Mab*, but that it was written and printed by the author when he was only nine-

<sup>1</sup> The brief, in the possession of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., was quoted from at length in the *Life of Shelley* by Professor Dowden, of whose account of the Chancery proceedings I have ventured to make liberal use.

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teen, and only distributed to personal friends ; twenty copies, it appears, had got abroad. The copy referred to by Miss Westbrook was one that Shelley had given confidentially to his late wife. He had not been able to obtain a copy of the *Letter to Lord Ellenborough*, as only a few copies were printed and none ever circulated publicly. Notwithstanding Shelley's "violent philippics against the despotism of marriage," he had married twice before he was twenty-five, and was "no sooner liberated from the despotic chains, which he speaks of with so much horror and contempt, than he forges a new set and becomes a willing victim of this horrid despotism." It was hoped that a consideration of the difference between his speculative opinions and his actions would induce the Lord Chancellor not to think very seriously of this boyish and silly but entirely unjustifiable publication of *Queen Mab*. There appeared to be no case in which the Chancellor had exercised his right of taking the children from the care of their father solely on account of his religious opinions, and as Shelley had married Miss Godwin, the objection of his connection with her was at an end. No danger at present could be apprehended as to the effects of the father's religious opinions. Shelley was tenant in tail to the Shelley estates to the value probably of £8000, besides having not very remote prospects of a still larger

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inheritance. If the children were taken from his care it might effect an estrangement of all parental affection on the one hand and filial piety on the other, and it was "feared that he might be led to look on the children which he might have by his present wife (one of whom was born during the life of the late Mrs. Shelley) as the sole objects of his affection, as well as of his pecuniary consideration." It was presumed that the petition of the Westbrooks for the custody of the children would not be granted, as Mr. Westbrook formerly kept a coffee-house. There were even greater objections to Miss Westbrook, who was described as "illiterate and vulgar," and it was by her "advice and active concurrence, and it may be said by her *management*, that Mr. Shelley when at the age of nineteen ran away with Miss Westbrook, then of the age of seventeen, and married her in Scotland. Miss Westbrook was then nearly thirty, and if she had acted as she ought to have done as the guardian and friend of her younger sister, all this misery and disgrace to both families would have been avoided."

The case was heard on Friday, January 24, 1817, before Lord Chancellor Eldon, who declared that he would give his decision on another day. Subsequently an application was made to him to deliver his judgment in his private room, and this he arranged to do.

While the decision was still in the balance, Shelley

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wrote to Mary, on January 30th, in a depressed mood :  
“ I have little doubt in my own mind but that they will succeed in the criminal part of the business—I mean that some such punishment as imprisonment and fine will be awarded me by a jury.”

The Chancellor gave his judgment in writing on March 17, 1817. He stated that there was nothing in evidence before him to authorise him in thinking that Shelley had changed before he arrived at the age of twenty-five the principles he avowed at nineteen, that he thought there was ample evidence in the papers and the conduct that no such change had taken place. That this was a case in which, as the matter appeared to him, the father's principles could not be misunderstood, in which his conduct, which he (the Chancellor) could not but consider as highly immoral, had been established in proof, and established as the effect of those principles ; conduct nevertheless which he represented to himself and others, not as conduct to be considered as immoral, but to be recommended and observed in practice and as worthy of approbation. He considered it, therefore, as a case in which the father had demonstrated that he must and did deem it to be a matter of duty which his duties imposed upon him, to recommend to those whose opinions and habits he might take upon himself to form, that conduct in some of the most important relations of life

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as moral and virtuous, which the law called upon him (the Chancellor) to consider as immoral and vicious—conduct which the law animadverted upon as inconsistent with the duties of persons in such relations of life, and which it considered as injuriously affecting both the interests of such persons and those of the community.

That he could not therefore think that he would be justified in delivering over the children for their education exclusively to what was called the care to which Mr. Shelley wished it to be intrusted. That much had been said upon the fact that the children were of tender years. That in what degree and to what extent the Court would interfere in that case against parental authority could not be finally determined till after the Master's report. That in the meantime he restrained the father and his agents from taking possession of the persons of the infants or intermeddling with them till further order, and he referred it to the Master to inquire what would be a proper plan for the maintenance and education of the infants and also to inquire with whom and whose care the infants should remain during their minority or until further order.

Shelley had lost his case, and it now remained for him and for the Westbrooks to nominate guardians for the care and education of the children.

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On August 1st the following proposals were laid before the Master in Chancery with regard to their education and for the appointment of a proper person under whose care they should be placed. Shelley, as defendant, nominated his solicitor, P. W. Longdill, and his wife for that position, and the plaintiffs proposed that the children should be placed in the family of the Rev. John Kendall, who was the Master of Lord Leicester's Hospital at Warwick, and Vicar of Budbroke. The children, as a matter of fact, at the time of Harriet Shelley's death were under the care of this Mr. Kendall. The Master certified that, as the children "would have a better chance of receiving such an education as would contribute to their future welfare and happiness in Mr. Kendall's family than if they were brought up according to the proposal under the directions of their father, he approved the proposal laid before him on behalf of the plaintiffs."

Mary Shelley, in writing to Mrs. Leigh Hunt on August 16th, says: "Our sensations of indignation have been a little excited this morning by the decision of the Master of Chancery. He says the children are to go to this old clergyman in Warwickshire, who is to stand instead of a parent. An old fellow whom no one knows and [who] never saw the children. This is somewhat beyond credibility did we not see it in black and white. Longdill is very angry that his

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proposition is rejected, and means to appeal from the Master to the Lord Chancellor." Apparently Longdill made an appeal, for if he did not himself secure the custody of the children, it was decided that they should be removed from the care of Mr. Kendall.

Mr. Whitton wrote to Sir Timothy, on November 24th, to inform him that the Chancellor had refused to appoint either Mr. Longdill or Mr. Kendall as guardian of the children. The question of the custody of the children, however, was not settled till some months later. The Master in his report, dated April 28, 1818, stated that Mr. Westbrook had named the Rev. Jacob Cheesborough of Ulcombe, Kent, and his wife as suitable guardians, but the Master approved of the persons nominated by Shelley, namely Thomas Hume of Brent End Lodge, Hanwell, Doctor in Medicine, and Caroline his wife, "with whom and under whose care the infants shall remain during their minorities or until further Order of the Court."

Dr. Hume and Mr. Cheesborough both submitted proposals and plans for the education of the children to the Master, who gave his approval to Dr. and Mrs. Hume's scheme.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hume proposed that the boy, who was then about three, should at the age of seven

<sup>1</sup> The following are the chief points of Dr. Hume's scheme from the Master's Report.

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be placed at a good school to be instructed in the rudiments of the classics, in ancient and modern history, and be prepared for one of the large or public schools, whither he should be sent at a proper age, if circumstances permitted, to one of the universities. But with respect to placing him at the university, or by anticipation pointing out any particular profession or mode of life for the child, Dr. Hume considered it would be premature. In the choice of schools Dr. and Mrs. Hume would prefer one under the superintendence of an orthodox clergyman of the Church of England, but he did not consider the circumstance of the headmaster being a clergyman positively essential if there were other points of high recommendation in favour of an establishment.

With respect to the girl, then of the age of about five, it was suggested that she should be educated at home under the immediate eye of Mrs. Hume, who would herself instruct her in history, geography, and literature in general. The accomplishments of drawing, painting, music, singing, and dancing should receive all the attention they deserve, when the child displayed a capacity of receiving the necessary instructions; and the more homely employments of fancy work and sewing should not be neglected; domestic economy too should receive its share of attention. In short, Dr. and Mrs. Hume, feeling that a young mind

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must be continually occupied, would endeavour to keep it occupied by those things which in some way or other lead to its improvement or to general usefulness. Upon the score of dress Dr. and Mrs. Hume would, if necessary, be very positive on the absolute necessity of resisting and disregarding the fashions of the day, if they included, as they do in their opinion at the present day, an apparent abandonment of all feelings of feminine delicacy and decency. Habitual neatness of dress they would require on the most private occasions, and an habitual decency of dress on all occasions. As to the general reading of the girl at a more advanced age, Dr. and Mrs. Hume would, as far as their influence extended, keep from her perusal all books that tended to shake her faith in any of the great points of the established religion. They would discountenance the reading of novels, except, perhaps, some few unexceptionable books of that sort. They would to a certain degree encourage the reading, and indeed the studying of some of our best poets, but with respect to Pope and some others Dr. Hume would take care that she was furnished with selections only. Of Shakespeare Dr. Hume understands an edition purified from its grossness has been published, and this edition he would put into her hand. He believes that an edition of Hume's *History of England* has lately been published in which his insidious attacks on religion are omitted,

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and with this edition Dr. Hume would take care she was provided.

To the morals of the children Dr. and Mrs. Hume would pay particular attention, and would make instruction and discipline go hand in hand. They would endeavour strongly to impress on the children notions of modesty and self-diffidence, and to repress every feeling of vanity and self-sufficiency. They would endeavour to inculcate in them high notions of the value of a character for truth and personal honour, and a thorough detestation of affectation, deceitfulness, and falsehood. Dr. and Mrs. Hume conceived it was the duty of a parent and guardian, among other things, in not countenancing—and, indeed, in not tolerating—any irreverent allusions in matters of religion. On the subject of religion they would bring up the children in the faith and tenets of the Church of England ; they would deem it an imperative duty to inculcate on them solemn, serious, and orthodox notions of religion, but at the same time they would be cautious not prematurely to lead their unripe minds to that momentous subject. To a morning and evening prayer and thanksgiving, and to grace before and after meals, they would regularly accustom the children, and would take occasion to inculcate on them general religious feeling without bringing to their notice controversial points that might excite doubts

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which they would be unable to solve. What is clearly revealed they would teach them fervently to embrace.' A regular attendance at Divine Service on Sundays Dr. and Mrs. Hume would (when the children arrive at a proper age) consider an indispensable duty.

With respect to the intercourse to be permitted between Mr. Shelley and his children, the Lord Chancellor having intimated that he should suspend his judgment as to how far and in what degree he would in this case interfere, Dr. and Mrs. Hume would feel it their bounden duty implicitly to obey the order and directions of the Lord Chancellor with respect to the intercourse and interference of Mr. Shelley with the children, whatever that order and these directions might be.

It is not surprising that such a rule of perfection should have proved irresistible to the Master in Chancery. But Dr. and Mrs. Hume were evidently so conscious of the responsibility that they were prepared to undertake, or so very eager to obtain the guardianship of the children, that they carefully left no point in their education unconsidered. Their scheme embraced much that was calculated to turn out a couple of young prigs. It would be interesting to know what Shelley thought of this plan, if he ever saw it, for the education and upbringing of his children. Fortunately this worthy couple were

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not given many years to apply to the children their system.

The children remained with Dr. Hume until they were removed from his care by an order of the Court of Chancery dated January 22, 1822, and placed in the custody of the Rev. James Williams and Elizabeth his wife, of Chelsfield, near Fooks Cray, in Kent. Their nomination was made on the recommendation of the Westbrooks, whose solicitors, Messrs. Dease, Dendy & Morphett, wrote on January 2, 1822, to Mr. Whitton saying that Sir John Lubbock and Mr. Alderman Atkins had seats in Mr. Williams' neighbourhood, and were well acquainted with him. Sir Timothy approved of "the situation at Chelsfield for the Poor Little Innocents under so respectable recommendations as well as the sacred obligation Sir J. W. Lubbock and Mr. Richard Williams offer from the usage of the Court of Chancery."<sup>1</sup>

With the death of Shelley, his allowance for the maintenance of the children ceased. Mr. John A. Powell, the solicitor for Shelley's executors, furnished Mr. Whitton, on November 15, 1822, with copies of certificates to prove the poet's marriage with Harriet Westbrook in Scotland and London, and the birth of their son, and he added that he presumed the sum usually allowed for the children's maintenance and

<sup>1</sup> Sir Timothy Shelley to William Whitton, Feb. 3, 1822.

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education had been stopped until the legitimacy of the son had been proved. Whitton wrote to Powell, on March 10, 1823, stating that Sir Timothy agreed to pay the next quarterly allowance, but that he declined to give any pledge or assurance that he would continue his payments for the children, as any such payment might be unnecessary if the legacies given to the children by their father should be raised for their benefit.

The difficulty of providing for the children was surmounted by an order of the Court of Chancery (dated July 21, 1823) appointing Sir Timothy Shelley guardian of his grandson Charles Bysshe Shelley, and Mr. Westbrook and his daughter, Mrs. Farthing Beauchamp (formerly Eliza Westbrook), guardians of Eliza Ianthe Shelley.

Sir Timothy put little Charles to school with the Rev. Alexander Greenlaw, D.C.L.,<sup>1</sup> of Zion House Academy, Brentford, where Shelley received his first schooling. Mr. Wniton wrote from his office to Sir Timothy about the boy on August 8, 1823: "Charles is well engaged at a Mutton Chop in my front room. Mr. Williams [his custodian] brought him here this morning and I paid him £50 for his quarter and half quarter and for his

<sup>1</sup> In Foster's *Alumni Oxonienses* he is described as "Rev. Alexander Greenlaw, son of John, of Elgin, co. Moray, Scot. Gent., St. Alban Hall. Matric. 8 July 1790, aged 25; B.A., 1796; M.A., 1801; B.C.L. and D.C.L., 1804; died at Blackheath, 1829."

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Journey. I intend to take him home with me in the afternoon, and put him into the hands of Mrs. Whitton so that he may be properly clothed and all necessary articles be prepared for his going to school on Monday." Charles, however, was unwell and the Whittons detained him for a few days, when Mrs. Whitton took him to school herself and saw Dr. Greenlaw, who promised to give him his particular attention. When Whitton's daughter saw the boy some days later he told her that he was "happy." It is to be hoped that Charles had a better time at the school than his father, for he was a delicate child. There is a reference to him in a letter of Whitton's to Sir Timothy on October 27, 1823, in which he says that his wife had brought Charles to Stockwell on Saturday, that "he returned this morning," apparently to school, and he had a bad cold. Three years later, in June 1826, we read in Whitton's correspondence that the boy was lying ill at Field Place and was being looked after by his grandmother and aunts, and that a physician had been called in. As a matter of fact, the child was suffering from consumption. Whitton wrote to Peacock about the boy's health and enclosed a doctor's report; he does not mention the nature of his complaint, but its gravity was apparent, as he says he fears it puts a complete negative to Mrs. Shelley's hope of raising an annuity "upon her expectant interest in the Estates incumbered as they have

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been." The condition of the boy grew rapidly worse : his grandfather, who was undoubtedly fond of him, wrote on September 11th from Field Place to Whitton : " Last evening the medical attendant doubted if poor little Charles could survive an hour, but not all night : with attention and care he still exists, it cannot be for long, nor does he suffer by pain, and the great consolation was, he talked of getting downstairs and be better. The next time I write in all human probability that he is called to another, and, I trust, a better world." On September 14th, Whitton wrote to Peacock to say that he had just received a letter from Sir Timothy with the news of " the death of poor dear little Charles without a struggle. Will you please to acquaint Mrs. Shelley of this event." Mr. Westbrook was also informed of the fact through his solicitor.

In the Register at Warnham, Sussex, is the following entry among the burials :

1826. Sep. 16. Charles Bysshe, son of late Percy Bysshe and Harriet Shelley age 11 years.

EVAN EDWARDS, *Vicar*.

From this it appears that the boy was buried by Mr. Edwards, who had taught his father the elements of Latin in 1798.

Mrs. Beauchamp proved a kind guardian to her niece Ianthe, who married, on September 27, 1837,

## Marlow

Mr. Edward Jeffries Esdaile, by whom she had two sons, Charles and William. The latter became a clergyman, and died in 1915; he recalled with gratitude in later years his early impressions of Mrs. Beauchamp and her kindness to his mother. He remembered her "as a handsome, grand old lady, with dark front of hair, piercing dark eyes, and with a kind manner to children, but of whom we were somewhat afraid. Her carriage, old-fashioned large chariot, spot dog, large horses, man-servant, lady-companion, formed a whole which made a deep impression on my childish memory." <sup>1</sup>

The name of Eliza Westbrook's husband was originally Farthing, and he was a clerk in a London bank, when an old lady named Beauchamp fell in love with him and left him all her property, on condition that he should change his name to Beauchamp. <sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Beauchamp subsequently inherited the property of her father, John Westbrook, who died in 1835 at Walford House, Mr. Beauchamp's residence. In his will (proved May 22, 1835, by Robert Farthing Beauchamp and John Squire, the surviving executors) he is described merely as of Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square, but in the Probate Act as formerly of Mount

<sup>1</sup> These reminiscences of the Rev. William Esdaile were given by Professor Dowden in his *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 142.

## Shelley in England

Coffee-house, Grosvenor Square, afterwards of Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square, but late of Walford House, near Taunton, in the County of Somerset. He bequeathed the whole of his residuary estate to his executors upon trust for his daughter and only surviving child Elizabeth for life, and then to her children. The personal estate was sworn under £60,000.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Ianthe Esdaile, as stated on an earlier page, died in June 1876.

For the sake of continuity we have followed the fortunes of Shelley's children by Harriet, but we will now return to his doings at the beginning of the year 1817. On February 14th he took a place, afterwards known as Albion House, in West Street, Great Marlow, from the preceding December 21st, on a lease for twenty-one years. The house, or houses, of which there were

<sup>1</sup> John Westbrook is described as of the Parish of St. Mary, Lambeth, vintner, in the Bond into which he entered on July 15, 1780, with the Bishop of London, for his marriage with Ann Elliott of the Parish of St. George, Hanover Square, Spinster. In the allegation bearing the same date as above, Westbrook is described as a bachelor aged twenty-nine years, and Miss Elliott as twenty-three. The marriage was solemnized on July 20, 1780. The Mount Coffee-house where Westbrook made his money was at No. 78 Lower Grosvenor Street, a few doors from New Bond Street. The house, which still appears to be the old building, has been renumbered 80. It is now a private residence in the occupation of Dr. Cowper. Peter Cunningham tells us that there was a famous coffee-house in Mount Street known as *The Mount*, frequented by Laurence Sterne during the latter years of his life, while he was occupying lodgings at 41 Old Bond Street, where he died on March 18, 1768. Sterne addressed many of his letters from this coffee-house. The site of No. 23 Chapel Street is now occupied by part of No. 2 Aldford Street.

## Marlow

three adjoining each other, had lately been in the occupation of the governor and members of the Royal Military College, and was the property of Mr. Jeffrey Tylecote of Burton-on-Trent. Besides these three houses, with the gardens belonging to them, Shelley had also taken a lease of a meadow of four acres adjoining. The north side of this meadow was bounded by land in the occupation of Rachel Hamilton, on the south by West Street, and on the east by Oxford Lane. Shelley remained in the house for about a year, and transferred the lease, on February 14, 1818, to a Mr. William Carter of Hackney.<sup>1</sup>

Shelley and Mary spent much of their time during the first three weeks of February 1817 with the Hunts at Hampstead, and were introduced to their interesting circle of acquaintances and friends. Mary's diary tells of Leigh Hunt's musical evenings; it mentions Keats, who came in several times; and it records the occasion on which he brought John Hamilton Reynolds to tea, so that the three "Young Poets" whose work had formed the subject of Hunt's recent article in the *Examiner* met together in the flesh. Keats, who was inclined to suspect those of gentler blood than himself, did not take to Shelley, and

<sup>1</sup> This information is derived from the deed of release which is in the possession of the author. The premises are not referred to as Albion House in the deed.

## Shelley in England

Shelley did not like Reynolds. Hazlitt was also a visitor of the Hunts, but Shelley's manner and voice made a bad impression on the essayist.<sup>1</sup> It was not so, however, with Horace Smith, whose

"Wit and sense,  
Virtue and human knowledge; all that might  
Make this dull world a business of delight,"

enabled him to thoroughly appreciate Shelley.

On Sunday, February 23rd, Shelley, Mary, William, and Clare went to Marlow. In the course of the following week they entered their new house, where Godwin paid them an early visit and stayed a night or two. Hunt then came down with his wife, and she prolonged her stay for a few weeks.

During the early days at Marlow, Mary busied herself with getting the house in order and with correcting

<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt in his essay "On Paradox and Commonplace," published in *Table Talk*, 1821, said: "The author of 'Prometheus Unbound' . . . has a fire in his eye, a fever in his blood, a maggot in his brain, a hectic flutter in his speech, which mark out the philosophic fanatic. He is sanguine-complexioned, and shrill-voiced." After Shelley's death, in reviewing the *Posthumous Poems* in the *Edinburgh Review* for July 1824, he gave a not unpleasing picture of the poet. He said: "Mr. Shelley was a remarkable man. His person was a type and shadow of his genius. His complexion fair, golden, freckled, seemed transparent with an inward light, and his spirit within him—

'So divinely wrought,  
That you might almost say his body thought.'

He reminded those who saw him of some of Ovid's fables. His form, graceful and slender, drooped like a flower in the breeze. But he was crushed beneath the weight of thought which he aspired to bear, and was withered in the lightning-glare of a ruthless philosophy!"

## Marlow

the proofs of her novel, *Frankenstein*, the publication of which was offered to John Murray and to Ollier and refused by both of them. It was subsequently issued by Lackington, probably in January 1818. While the book was on offer to Lackington, Mary gave birth, on September 2nd, at Marlow, to a girl, who was named Clara Everina, after Clare Clairmont and her great-aunt Everina Wollstonecraft.

Shelley's summer task was the composition of his poem *Laon and Cythna*,<sup>1</sup> a task to which he addressed himself, as he tells us in the preface, "with unremitting ardour and enthusiasm." The manuscript was completed by the end of September. The poem was dedicated to Mary in lines breathing love and fervour, lines in which he recalled the storm and stress of his youth and voiced his hope and fears of the future. The dedication concludes with these memorable lines :

"If there must be no response to my cry—  
If men must rise and stamp with fury blind  
On his pure name who loves them,—thou and I,  
Sweet friend ! can look from our tranquillity  
Like lamps into the world's tempestuous night,—  
Two tranquil stars, while clouds are passing by  
Which wrap them from the foundering seaman's sight,  
That burn from year to year with unextinguished light."

One rejected fragment of this dedication is preserved among the portions of the original manuscript at

<sup>1</sup> After a few copies were issued under this title, the poem underwent several alterations which were made by the insertion of cancelled leaves, and it was subsequently published as *The Revolt of Islam*.

## Shelley in England

Avington, Hants. Shelley has decorated it with a pretty drawing of trees, such as he sometimes sketched on the blank leaves of his manuscripts, but it possesses a stronger personal interest. The first portion of the holograph is apparently an early draft of stanza xiii, but the lines that follow, which form a part of stanza vi, contain some cancelled lines relating undoubtedly to Harriet Grove:

“She whom I found was dear but false to me,”  
and to Harriet Shelley:

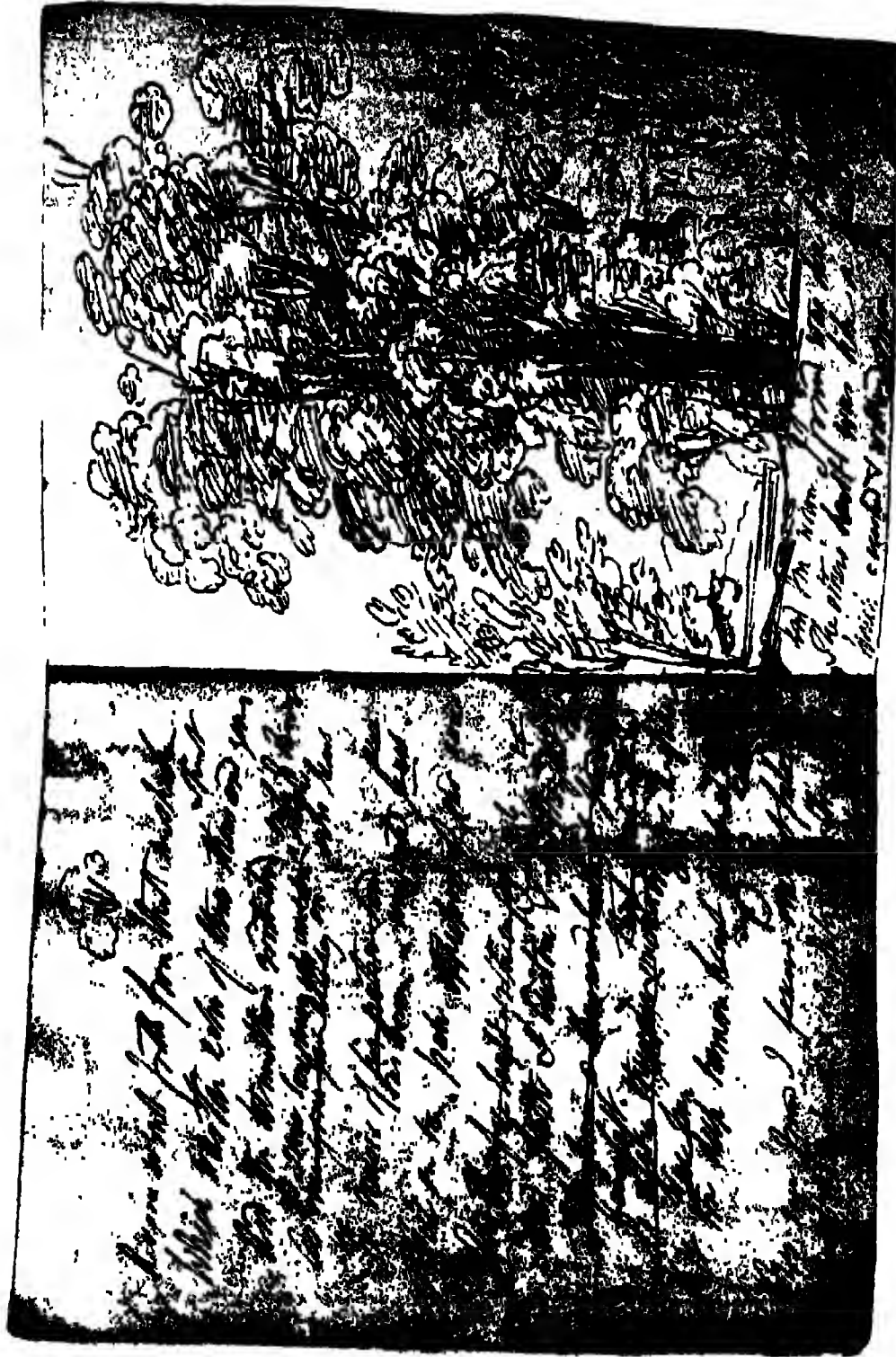
“The other’s heart was like a heart of stone  
Which crushed and withered mine.”

“A voice went forth from that mis[s]hapen spirit  
Which was the echo of three thousand years  
And the tumultuous world stood mute to hear it  
As some lone man who on a sudden hears  
The music of his [fatherland]<sup>1</sup> home—unwonted [awe] fears

Fell on the pale oppressors of our race  
[And the free lept forth in joy]  
And faith and custom and low-thoughted cares  
[Fled from a thousand hearts and found no  
[Of songs left that could not be]  
[Aught] Like thunder-stricken dragons for a space  
[Were torn] Left the deep human heart which is their . . .  
dwelling place.

Nor ever found I [found] one not false to me  
[Hearts] Hard hearts and cold like weights of icy stone  
That crushed and withered mine [which ne’er could]  
[and] She whom I found was dear but false to me  
The other’s heart was like a heart of stone  
Which crushed and withered mine.”

<sup>1</sup> The words between brackets are cancelled in the MS.



LAON AND CYTHNA (DEDICATION XIII).



## Marlow

The summer days seem to have slipped pleasantly away, although the Shelleys were not entirely free from worries. Besides Shelley's health, which had suffered and given Mary cause for anxiety, there were Clare Clairmont's affairs and Godwin's pecuniary difficulties. Clare, the source of many calumnies directed against Shelley, was a pretty brunette full of life, who, with a yearning for romance, was prepared for any adventure that would lift her out of the paralysing monotony of her existence with the Godwin household at Skinner Street. After her return from her first visit to the Continent with Shelley and Mary she had called on Byron, who was connected with Drury Lane Theatre, to ask him for an introduction to the stage. She did not become an actress, but she met Byron again when she visited Geneva with the Shelleys in 1816, and she had an intrigue with him there. It is doubtful whether the Shelleys were ignorant of this intrigue, but Clare remained with them when they came back to England, and in January 1817 she gave birth at Bath to a daughter, subsequently named Allegra. The Shelleys continued to look after Clare and the child at Marlow, but the position was a painful one for Mary, owing to the difficulty of accounting to the neighbours for Allegra's parentage. Byron, the reputed father of the child, refused to correspond with her mother, and it fell to Shelley's lot to write to him.

## Shelley in England

So far from disowning Allegra, Byron seems to have been interested in the welfare of the child, but he behaved in a thoroughly callous manner towards Clare. When Shelley, Mary, and their children left England for the last time in 1818, Clare and Allegra went with them.

Shelley, as we have seen, received a considerable sum of money from his father, but this sum was insufficient to discharge his debts. These are said to have been partly debts incurred in his name by Harriet, but they consisted undoubtedly to a far greater extent of certain obligations that he had undertaken, with want of forethought, on behalf of Godwin. Godwin was so hopelessly involved that any endeavour to extricate him from his debts was a hopeless task. It was as hopeless as attempting to rescue a man in the toils of an octopus by trying to hack off its tentacles with a penknife. Shelley's correspondence with Godwin continued to be concerned with money matters, but it is not proposed to follow it here. It is sufficient to say that Shelley's affairs were again involved. Among his creditors was Captain Pilfold, who had evidently failed to obtain payment of a debt due to him from his nephew, and who had applied to Sir Timothy Shelley for it. The nature of the obligation does not appear, but it may have been that the Captain

## Marlow

had gone surety for Shelley, who was unable to meet the debt. Whitton wrote to Captain Pilfold at Nelson Hall, near Cuckfield, Sussex, on March 12th, saying that Sir Timothy Shelley had found it necessary to refer to him regarding Mr. B. Shelley's concerns, and declined to interfere in them, and he informed him that Bysshe's solicitors were Messrs. Longdill & Butterfield of Gray's Inn. The next mention of this affair is to be found in Mary's letter of October 16th from Marlow to Shelley, who was at London, in which she writes : " You say nothing of the late arrest, and what may be the consequences, and may they not detain you ? and may you not be detained many months, for Godwin must not be left unprovided ? All these things make me run over the months, and know not where to put my finger and say—during this year your Italian journey may commence." <sup>1</sup> Professor Dowden's comment on this passage that " Mary Shelley's fears of an arrest were not realised," however, was not correct. It would appear that not only was Shelley arrested before October 16th, the date of her letter, but that Mary seems to have feared that he was in danger of being arrested again, and cautioned him of the danger of returning to Marlow. She wrote, on

<sup>1</sup> Shelley had gone to town on September 23rd to consult Mr. William Lawrence, a pupil of Abernethy, with regard to his health. The physician recommended change of air and scene, and Shelley was inclined towards spending the winter in Italy.

## Shelley in England

October 18th : " Mr. Wright has called here to-day, my dearest Shelley, and wished to see you. I can hardly have any doubt that his business is of the same nature as that which made him call last week. You will judge, but it appears to me that an arrest on Monday will follow your arrival on Sunday. My love, you ought not to come down. A long long week has passed, and when at length I am allowed to expect you, I am obliged to tell you not to come."

There is evidence of Shelley's arrest, at the instance of his uncle, Captain Pilfold, in Mr. Whitton's minute-book, where the following entry appears under the date of October 22nd : " Attended Mr. Longdill on the arrest of Mr. Bysshe Shelley to Captain Pilfold and another creditor and the necessity of him raising money and his hope that Sir Timy would prevent the necessity of his selling his reversion." On the same day Whitton gave some further particulars of the arrest in a letter to Sir Timothy, in which he said that he had received "a visit some weeks since from Mr. Longdill stating that a Mr. Gordon of Brighton had offered Mr. Shelley to purchase the Reversion of the farm in Shipley at £3000, that Mr. Shelley had debts to satisfy, and that unless he could borrow some money he must sell. I did not trouble you," Whitton continued, " with a communication in writing, but I told

## Marlow

Mr. Longdill that you would not buy and I believe would not lend. He has just called on me again and I find that he has been arrested for his debt and by a person who held a bill which he accepted for a friend and that his debts amount to about £1500, and as I suppose to a much larger amount for he and such like persons seldom estimate on more debts than what they are pressed for the payment of. I mention these circumstances because I am desired to do so, but I am far from thinking it right that I should recommend you to do anything for his relief, or to involve yourself with his debts. As he will sell soon should you now advance what he wants, I do not see that you can protect him against himself without involving your other inoffending children. I cannot but think he should be left to find his own means. If however you think otherwise and will let me know your wishes, I will endeavour to execute them. Your past exertions to support him and prevent a waste of his property must be your consolation. I understand that he was under arrest for two days by Mr. Pilfold, and that it has been most annoying to him as he says his character has suffered from it."

The date of Shelley's arrest is not mentioned. If he were arrested before October 16th, as Mary's letter would have us believe, it may have occurred between

## Shelley in England

September 30th, when he went to town, and October 10th, when he returned to Marlow. On October 11th he went to London, and he came to Marlow on the following day with Godwin, and left for town with him on October 16th.

During Shelley's residence at Great Marlow he issued two pamphlets under the pseudonym of "The Hermit of Marlow." The first of these brochures was *A Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote throughout the Kingdom*. Accepting the fact that the people were not properly represented by the House of Commons, he advocated, as a remedy, an extension of the franchise and the summoning of annual parliaments, and he suggested that a vote of the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland should be taken to ascertain if they desired such a reform. Towards the expenses of obtaining this plebiscite Shelley was willing to contribute a sum of one hundred pounds, or a tenth part of his annual income, and he believed that others also would be found to support the work. He did not advocate universal suffrage, as he considered that the public were unprepared for it through lack of education, but he thought that none save "those who register their names as paying certain sums in direct taxes ought to send members to Parliament."

The other Marlow pamphlet was entitled *An Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte*.

## Marlow

Here he contrasted the death of the Princess with the execution of Brandath, Turner, and Ludlam, three operatives who had been convicted of taking part in the so-called Derbyshire insurrection. On November 7th, the day after the Princess died, these wretched men were drawn on hurdles to the place of execution, where they were hanged and decapitated in public. The death of the Princess, as heir to the throne, was generally accepted as a national calamity, whereas Shelley pointed out the real calamity was the state of England that had caused these uneducated men to commit acts of violence which, though he deprecated them, had been expiated by a punishment barbarous in its severity. These pamphlets constituted Shelley's final public utterances on politics, and they probably both had a limited circulation, that of the last, it is said, being restricted to a private issue of twenty copies.

Early in October 1817 Shelley and Mary had determined to quit Marlow, and their chief cause for this decision was that his health had suffered during their tenancy: the house, so Mary complained, was very damp, and the books in the library were mildewed. It was necessary, however, to let the house before they could arrange to leave it, and this Shelley managed to do, according to Miss Clairmont's diary, on January 25, 1818.

## Shelley in England

He appears to have left Marlow for London on February 7th. Clare followed with William and Allegra on the 8th, and Mary departed with her baby on the following day.

Before he quitted Marlow Shelley raised a sum of £2000 from William Willatts of Fore Street, Cripple-gate, to whom he undertook to pay, within three calendar months after the death of his father, Sir Timothy Shelley, a sum of £4500.

In connection with this transaction Shelley signed the following letter :<sup>1</sup>

### *P. B. Shelley to William Willatts*

TO MR. WILLIAM WILLATS.

SIR,—You having lent me on security a sum of Money and Insured my Life the Policy of which Insurance will be void if I leave England without giving you notice so that you may increase your insurance if you think fit, I hereby promise you not to leave England without giving you sufficient previous Notice for that purpose.

I am, Sir,

Your Obedt. Servt.,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

LONDON, *Jan.* 31, 1818.

*Witness :* Wm. Richardson, Clement's Inn.

George Adams, Fore Street.

Thos. Dignam, Clerk to Wm. Richardson,  
Clement's Inn.

<sup>1</sup> The signature and date only of this letter are in Shelley's handwriting.

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On arriving in London the Shelleys went to lodgings at Great Russell Street, Covent Garden, the street in which the Lambs were then living. Their days were fully occupied with leave-takings and with preparations for their visit to Italy. Although Shelley anticipated a lengthy sojourn abroad, he hardly realised that he was taking final leave of England. Mary wrote in her diary, on March 9th, "Christening the children," who were taken to St. Giles in the Fields, where the register records the baptisms, on that date, of William and Clara Everina, children of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Esq., and Mary Wollstonecraft his wife, of Great Marlow, co. Bucks. (late of Great Russell Street), the first born January 24, 1816, the second September 21, 1817; also Clara Allegra, reputed daughter of Rt. Hon. George Gordon, Lord Byron, Peer, of no fixed residence, travelling on the Continent, by Clara Mary Jane Clairmont, born January 17, 1817. The officiating clergyman was Charles Macarthy. Shelley's last days in London were spent in the society of his friends; he saw Hunt, Hogg, Peacock, Horace Smith, and Keats. Hogg, who dined with Shelley in London on Sunday, February 15th, probably saw him for the last time on that occasion. On the eve of the Shelleys' departure, March 10th, Mary Lamb called to say good-bye, and Peacock supped with them, after attending the first performance in England of Rossini's well-

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known *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* ; Godwin, Leigh Hunt, and his wife were probably also of the party. During the evening Shelley was overcome by one of his profound slumbers, and the Hunts, unwilling to arouse him, went away without bidding him farewell.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE PARADISE OF EXILES

Shelley leaves England—Lyons—Allegra—Byron and Miss Clairmont—Shelley at Venice—Death of Clara—Rome—William Shelley's death—Leghorn—Shelley's *annus mirabilis*—Birth of Percy Florence Shelley—Miss Stacey—The Pisa circle—The arrival of Leigh Hunt—Shelley's death and burial—His heart—The reception of the news by Sir Timothy—Miss Hitchener's death—*Gentleman's Magazine* on Shelley—Byron and Mary—Sir Timothy's parsimony—Mary's departure from Italy.

SHELLEY and his travelling companions left London early on the morning of March 11th, and, spending the night at Dover, they crossed to Calais on the following day. Lyons was reached on Saturday, March 21st, where Shelley sent Byron a letter to inform him that Allegra had arrived thus far on her journey. Shelley wrote again to Byron from Milan in April inviting him to come and take charge of Allegra; Clare also wrote to him, consenting to surrender the child to its father. Clare agreed, notwithstanding the fact that Byron had stated he could only receive Allegra on the stipulation that her parting with the child should be final. Shelley in the meantime had heard some gossip about Byron's mode of life at Venice, and he endeavoured, but without avail,

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to dissuade Clare from giving the child into its father's care. On April 28th Mary's Swiss maid, Elise, left Milan with Allegra for Venice, and remained there as her nurse. It was not until August that Shelley and Byron met again. Clare, who had received some letters about Allegra from Elise, longed to see the child, and persuaded Shelley to take her to Venice, in the hope that Byron would relent. Clare remained with some friends while Shelley went alone to call on Byron, who gave him a warm welcome, and, believing that Clare was at Padua, he consented that the child should visit her mother at that place for a week. Byron took Shelley in his gondola to the Lido, where horses were in waiting for them, and they rode along the sands talking. "Our conversation," wrote Shelley,<sup>1</sup> "consisted in histories of his wounded feelings, and questions as to my affairs, and great professions of friendship and regard for me. He said, that if he had been in England at the time of the Chancery affair, he would have moved heaven and earth to have prevented such a decision." This memorable ride on the Lido, "the bank of land which breaks the flow of Adria towards Venice," was afterwards immortalised by Shelley in his *Julian and Maddalo*. Byron, who had a high regard for Shelley as a man and a poet, offered him the use of his villa

<sup>1</sup> In his letter to Mary, August 23, 1818.

## The Paradise of Exiles

at I Cappuccini, near Este. Mrs. Shelley, in her notes to her husband's poem for 1818, has described this villa as "built on the site of a Capuchin convent, demolished when the French suppressed religious houses; it was situated on the very overhanging brow of a low hill at the foot of a range of higher ones. The house was cheerful and pleasant; a vine-trellised walk—a pergola, as it is called in Italian—led from the hall door to a summer-house at the end of the garden, which Shelley made his study, and in which he began the *Prometheus*; and here also, as he mentions in a letter, he wrote *Julian and Maddalo*. A slight ravine, with a road in its depth, divided the garden from the hill, on which stood the ancient castle of Este, whose dark, massive walls gave forth an echo, and from whose ruined crevices owls and bats flitted forth at night, as the crescent moon sank behind the black and heavy battlements. We looked from the garden over the wide plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the fair Apennines, while to the east the horizon was lost in the misty distance. After the picturesque, but limited, view of mountain, ravine, and chestnut wood at the Baths of Lucca, there was something infinitely gratifying to the eye in the wide range of prospect commanded by our new abode."

To this place Mary set out on August 31st, but her

## Shelley in England

little girl, Clara, was taken ill on the journey, and when she arrived the child's condition was serious. On September 24th Shelley and Mary took Clara to Venice, but as soon as they reached that place she showed symptoms of increased weakness. A physician was summoned, but he could do nothing for the little patient, who expired shortly after, and was buried the following day on the Lido.

The Shelleys spent the winter in Naples, and in the spring of 1819 they visited Rome ; but they protracted their visit too long, and at the beginning of June they were still there. The climate which was responsible for Clara's death brought on a fever which also proved fatal to little William Shelley. He was only ill for a few days, but his case was hopeless from the first. While he lingered, his father watched by his bedside for sixty hours without closing his eyes. On Monday, June 7th, at noon, the day on which Shelley and Mary had arranged to leave Rome for Leghorn, the child died, and was laid in a nameless grave in the English burial-ground at Rome, near the Porta San Paolo. William Shelley's dust rests in the same earth that covers the mortal remains of Keats. Some months later Shelley gave instructions for a monument to be placed over the child's grave, and as he was not in Rome at the time to superintend the work, the stone was placed over the body of an adult. This

## The Paradise of Exiles

accident was afterwards discovered when it was desired to move the child's body and place it beside the father's ashes in the adjoining cemetery.

Shelley and Mary were anxious to escape from Rome, with its painful associations of the presence and loss of their only child. Their friends, the Gisbornes, were living 'at Leghorn, and in order to be near them the Shelleys took, for three months, the Villa Valsovano, a small house in the neighbourhood of the town. Here Shelley, in his little glazed-roof study, "Scythrop's Tower" (as he named it, after Peacock's "Nightmare Abbey"), at the top of the house, attempted, by means of literary work, to chase away his grief. There he wrote his tragedy *The Cenci*, a task which, he told Peacock, had occupied him for two months, and of which the first rough draft was finished on August 8th. He also completed the *Prometheus Unbound*, begun at Este, as far as the third act. The fourth act, which was an afterthought that occurred to him at Florence, was completed by the end of December. The year 1819 was Shelley's *annus mirabilis*; his literary activities at Leghorn included yet another achievement, namely, a poem in quite another strain, the delightful conversation piece of *Julian and Maddalo*. As Professor Dowden says: "To have created such poems as *Prometheus* and *The Cenci* in one year is an achievement without parallel

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in English poetry since Shakespeare lived and wrote.”

But the Villa Valsovano was a sad place without the children and with Mary's melancholy, which followed on the death of William. Her grief was alleviated by the birth of a boy on November 12th at Florence, where she, Shelley, and Clare had gone at the beginning of October. Shelley, in announcing this event to his friend Leigh Hunt, wrote on November 13th: "Yesterday morning Mary brought me a little boy. She suffered but two hours' pain, and is now so well that it seems a wonder that she stays in bed. The babe is also quite well, and has begun to suck. You may imagine that this is a great relief and a great comfort to me amongst all my misfortunes, past, present, and to come. . . . Poor Mary begins (for the first time) to look a little consoled; for we have spent, as you imagine, a miserable five months." The child, who was named Percy Florence, succeeded his grandfather, Sir Timothy Shelley, on his death in April 1844, as third baronet.

Shortly before Percy's birth, Miss Sophia Stacey, with Miss Jones, her travelling companion, arrived in Florence from Sussex. Mrs. Angeli informs us in her book, *Shelley and his Friends in Italy*, that Miss Stacey was the youngest daughter of Mr. Flint Stacey of Sittingbourne, and, on the death of her father, she

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became a ward of Shelley's uncle, Mr. Robert Parker. During her residence with Mr. Parker at Bath she said she had naturally heard much of Shelley, and, as Mary told Mrs. Gisborne in a letter, Miss Stacey "was *enthousiasmée* to see him." Two days after her arrival she called at the Palazzo Marini, and learnt that Shelley, his wife, and Miss Clairmont were staying there. Miss Stacey kept a diary, from which Mrs. Angeli has given in her book a charming and unexpected sidelight on Shelley's life at Florence. Miss Stacey wrote some years later: "I shall never forget his personal appearance. His face was singularly engaging, with strongly marked intellectuality. His eyes were, however, the most striking portion of his face, blue and large and of a tenderness unsurpassed. In his manner there was an almost childish simplicity combined with much refinement." She tells us that Shelley kept a carriage but no horses, "being more humane to keep fellow-creatures." She was struck by the quiet life of the poet and his wife, who did not mix with their fellow-countrymen at Florence. Miss Stacey seemed to take pleasure in listening to his talk on the Established Church and Radicalism, on Love, Liberty, and Death. He spoke to her of his sisters, of his youthful adventures, discoursed on authors and music, and desired to be remembered to his uncle, Mr. Parker. She also noted his studious

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habits and his devotion to books. "He is always reading, and at night has a little table with pen and ink, she [Mary] the same."

Shelley showed his baby, then two days old, to Miss Stacey, and remarked that, although it could do no mischief now, it might some day or other be the conqueror of provinces. And she then looked at a picture of William Shelley, and recognised the likeness to Lady Shelley, his grandmother. Miss Stacey delighted Shelley with her singing, and in return for the pleasure that he derived from it he gave her the verses "I arise from dreams of thee," and afterwards wrote in her pocket-book three songs—"Good-night," "Love's Philosophy," and "Time Long Past." The poet undoubtedly admired his young friend, and, after hearing her frequently play on the harp, he wrote for her his beautiful lines, "Thou art fair, and few are fairer." He assisted her and her friend in making their preparations for leaving Florence, and went with them to look at the carriage that they had engaged to take them to Rome, the step of which being high, he gallantly lifted Miss Stacey to the ground. When the day arrived for their departure, Shelley rose early in order to see them off on their journey.

Sir Timothy alluded to Miss Stacey's visit and to the birth of his grandson on January 18, 1820, in a letter from Bath to Mr. Whitton :

## The Paradise of Exiles

“Some ladies travelling in Italy write to Bath that they met P. B. at Florence with an addition to his family of a Son : and with Lord Byron to whom he offer'd to introduce the ladies : which they declin'd. It is not likely he will soon visit England with so many unwelcome guests to ask how he does by a gentle tap.”

The statement that Byron was at Florence during Miss Stacey's visit was incorrect : he was, as a matter of fact, at Ravenna. Shelley had told Miss Stacey how much he should like his friend to hear her sing, and he wrote asking Byron to come, but he was prevented by illness from visiting Florence.

The unwelcome guests mentioned in Sir Timothy's letters were his son's creditors, one of whom had that day applied for the payment of a small amount. Other creditors learnt of Shelley's prolonged absence abroad, and they also wrote to his father, who seems to have been much annoyed by their applications, with which he invariably declined to deal. Sir Timothy was troubled with the gout, and tried to get relief from his malady by a visit to Bath, where he stayed several months, and where he seems to have purchased a house. He was concerning himself at this time with the education of his second son, John Shelley, who was now a youth of fourteen.

On January 26, 1820, the Shelleys left Florence, but before they departed their little boy, Percy Florence,

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was baptized by the Rev. John Harding, Rector of Coity, Glamorganshire, according to the forms appointed by the United Church of England and Ireland for the ministration of private baptism of children in houses. A copy of the certificate of baptism was taken by Peacock, on August 15, 1822, to the Rector of St. James', Westminster, and entered in the register of that church of baptisms solemnised out of England. Sir Percy Shelley, in a letter dated January 11, 1844, wrote in regard to his christening: "Miss Clairmont was present at my baptism. Mr. Hogg knew me when I was two years old." Mary added, in the same letter: "Mr. Leigh Hunt saw Percy just at the time of his father's death in Italy."

From Florence, Shelley and Mary went to Pisa, and there, in that ancient city, with its silent streets full of memories of the past, they spent on the whole a period of two years' tranquil happiness, broken by short occasional visits to Lucca and the Bagni di Pisa. Clare had obtained a situation in Florence, and her absence was a relief to Mary, who was able to indulge to some extent in her love of society. This proved no attraction to Shelley, who would not tolerate mere acquaintances, and he was prompted to say of his wife: "She can't bear solitude, nor I society—the quick coupled to the dead." Much as Shelley disliked society, he was now the chief object of interest of a



**CAPTAIN THOMAS MEDWIN**

*After a photograph in the possession of his only grand-daughter,  
Nobit Donna Zella Opezzo*



## The Paradise of Exiles

circle of sincere admirers, some of whom he himself regarded highly. In the summer of 1821 Edward Ellerker Williams and Jane Williams arrived at Pisa, and they soon became the intimate friends of Shelley and his wife. Williams had formerly been in the Navy, but having left that branch of the service, he obtained a commission in the 8th Dragoon Guards, and went to India. He returned to Europe with the lady to whom he was united, the Jane whose rare beauty moved Shelley to write some of his most inspired lyrics. Edward John Trelawny came to Pisa early in 1822, and was joined shortly after by Byron, and Thomas Medwin, Shelley's cousin and schoolfellow. Medwin was a bore, with literary aspirations, but he had an admiration for Shelley, who, though not usually long-suffering where bores were concerned, treated him with his accustomed kindness.<sup>1</sup> It was otherwise with Byron, whose companionship soon made Pisa intolerable to Shelley. The necessity of finding a more temperate situation for the summer months, and probably some desire to escape from Byron's society, led Shelley to take a house, the Casa Magni, situated on the seashore at Lerici, in the Bay of

<sup>1</sup> This period of Shelley's life has been very fully recorded by Trelawny in his excellent *Recollections, Records*, and in his *Letters*, edited by Mr. H. Buxton Forman; by Medwin in his *Life of Shelley*, which Mr. Forman has also recently re-edited; in Williams' interesting *Diary*, and in Mrs. Angeli's *Shelley and his Friends in Italy*.

## Shelley in England

Spezzia. Thither the Shelleys moved with the Williams's on April 26, 1822. It was a somewhat desolate place for Mary after Pisa, and she chafed at the solitude ; but Shelley found it entirely to his liking. Early in the year Trelawny, with Captain Roberts, had superintended the building for Shelley at Genoa of the fatal boat, a small schooner, afterwards named the *Ariel*, which was duly brought round to Lerici.

Leigh Hunt arrived at Leghorn towards the end of June with his wife and family, after an interminable voyage from England. He came at the invitation of Lord Byron to found and edit a quarterly magazine, afterwards known as the *Liberal*. Shelley, who had been looking forward to meeting his friend, left Lerici on July 1st with Williams in the *Ariel*, and spent a week at Leghorn and Pisa, mostly in Hunt's company. His last verses, in which he welcomed Leigh Hunt to Italy, unfortunately have been lost.

The tragic story of the deaths of Shelley and Williams is familiar to everyone. On the afternoon of July 8th, a day of extreme heat, after taking a last farewell of Leigh Hunt, they set sail for Lerici, but they never reached their destination. A violent storm swept over the sea shortly after they were on their way, and the boat was obscured from the view of Captain Roberts, who, from the top of the lighthouse at Leghorn, was watching the vessel on her homeward track.

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When the storm-cloud lifted, Roberts looked again, and observed every other vessel that he had seen in the *Ariel's* company, but she was no longer visible. After some days of agonising suspense, on July 18th, Shelley's body was cast up on the shore near Via Reggio; that of Williams had been recovered some three miles distant on the previous day. The bodies were buried temporarily on the shore near to where they had been discovered, and in order to effect their removal, they were disinterred some days later and cremated, according to the Tuscan law. On August 14th the remains of Williams were burnt, and on the day following the ceremony was repeated with Shelley's body by Trelawny, in the presence of Byron and Leigh Hunt. Shelley's cremation was described in detail both by Trelawny and Hunt. They related that, when the rest of his body had been reduced to ashes, his heart remained unconsumed, and it was snatched by Trelawny from the burning embers and given to Hunt, who afterwards resigned it to Mary Shelley.

After Mary's death Shelley's heart was found, wrapped in a silken shroud, between the leaves of her copy of the Pisa edition of *Adonais*, and the relic was afterwards enclosed in a silver case. When Sir Percy Shelley was buried, on December 10, 1889, in his mother's grave at St. Peter's, Bournemouth, the poet's

## Shelley in England

heart was interred with him. Many years previously Lady Shelley had told Mr. Walter Withall of Bedford Row (a friend of Sir Percy's), that she particularly wished him to see that the heart was placed in Sir Percy's coffin in the event of her predeceasing her husband. She also told him that the heart was kept in a cushion or pillow, which she always carried with her whenever she travelled.<sup>1</sup>

Two books were found in Shelley's pockets when his body was recovered: Keats's *Lamia*, of which only the binding remained, and this was thrown on the pyre; and a volume of Sophocles, now in the Bodleian. Trelawny afterwards placed Shelley's ashes in an oak casket, which was sent to Rome and interred in the English Cemetery in January 1823. In the spring of that year Trelawny visited Shelley's grave, and seeing that it was overcrowded, he moved the ashes to their present resting-place in the adjoining burial-ground.

The first intimation of the death of Shelley to reach England was contained in the following characteristic letter written by Leigh Hunt to his sister-in-law, Miss Elizabeth Kent, which arrived in London not later

<sup>1</sup> When Shelley House, Chelsea, was burgled, the thieves broke into Lady Shelley's boudoir and threw the cushion on the floor, and Lady Shelley remarked to Mr. Walter Withall that it was very fortunate it had not been taken. It was on this occasion that she gave him the above directions and showed him the pillow.

## The Paradise of Exiles

than the second or third day in August. The communication for Hunt's brother, John, for the *Examiner*, duly appeared in the next issue of that paper.

*Leigh Hunt to Elizabeth Kent*<sup>1</sup>

PISA, 20th July 1822.

DEAREST BESSY,—Your sister is as well as she can be expected to be ; so am I, and the children ; all which I tell you at once, at the head of my letter, lest the frightful note I am compelled to strike up, should affect you still more than it must. Good God ! how shall I say it ? My beloved friend Shelley,—my dear, my divine friend, the best of friends and men—he is no more. I know not how to proceed from anguish ; but you need not be under any alarm for me. Thank Heaven ! the sorrows that I have gone through enable me to bear this ; and we all endeavour to bear it as well as possible for each other's sakes, which is what he, the noble-minded being, would have wished. Would to God I could see him—his spirit—sitting this moment by the table. I think it would no more frighten me than the sight of my baby,—whom I kiss and wonder why he has not gone with him.

He was returning to Lerici by sea with his friend Captain Williams, who is said also to have been a most amiable man, and appeared so. It was on the 8th a storm arose ; and it is supposed the boat must have foundered not far from home. The bodies were thrown up some days after. Dear S. had retained a book in his pocket, which he told me he would not part with till he saw me again,—Keats's last publication. He

<sup>1</sup> From Leigh Hunt's *Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 189.

## Shelley in England

borrowed it to read as he went. It will be buried with him : that is to say, it is so already, on the sea-shore; but if he is taken up to be buried elsewhere, it shall go with him. Mr. Williams, too, left a wife, who was passionately fond of him. Conceive the terrible state in which the women are ;—but none of us I trust have known Shelley for nothing : the Williams doted on him ; and—I know what to say ; but rely upon me, I fear nothing. I am cooler in general than while writing this, and besides the patience to which I have been accustomed, I must work hard for our new publication, which will still go on. Lord B. is very kind.

Pray, show or send Hogg this letter for him to see ; and tell him I would have written him a separate one, but at present I am sure he will spare it me. I had already begun to enliven Shelley's hours with accounts of his pleasant sayings, and hoped to—but, good God ! how are one's most confident expectations cut short ! I embrace him as my friend and Shelley's.

Adieu, dearest Bessy, you will not wonder that I do not make this letter an answer to your last, which I was delighted to receive. It showed me you were well, and Henry out of danger.

Pray, send the following to my brother for the *Examiner*.

Your ever most affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

The news was soon abroad. Whitton knew of it on August 3rd ; Godwin heard of it a day later, and on August 6th he wrote to Mary : “ I heard only two days ago the most afflicting intelligence to you, and in some measure to all of us, that can be imagined—

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the death of Shelley on the 8th ultimo. I have had no direct information, the news only comes in a letter from Leigh Hunt to Miss Kent, and, therefore, were it not for the consideration of the writer, I should be authorised to disbelieve it. That you should be so overcome as not to be able to write is perhaps only too natural; but that Jane [Clare] could not write one line I could never have believed." <sup>1</sup>

It is noticeable that Godwin abstained from expressing any personal regret at Shelley's death. He had no word to say of the man who, in order to assist him, had impaired his fortune. Godwin, who did not understand his son-in-law, and set little value on his poetry, is said to have once remarked, on the evidence of Charles Clairmont, after seeing him in the street, "that Shelley was so beautiful, it is a pity he was so wicked"; and Mary wrote to Mrs Gisborne some years later: "Papa loves not the memory of Shelley, because he feels that he injured him."

Apparently the earliest public announcement of Shelley's death was Leigh Hunt's contribution to the *Examiner* (given below), which appeared on August 4, 1822, the thirtieth anniversary of the poet's birth. The notice was quoted on August 5th in the

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Mary W. Shelley*, by Mrs. Julian Marshall, vol. p. 6.

## Shelley in England

*Morning Chronicle*, and perhaps other newspapers also copied it.

“Those who know a great mind when they meet with it, and who have been delighted with the noble things in the works of Mr. Shelley, will be shocked to hear that he has been cut off in the prime of his life and genius. He perished at sea, in a storm, with his friend Captain Williams, of the Fusiliers, on the evening of the 8th ult., somewhere off Via Reggio, on the coast of Italy, between Leghorn and the Gulf of Spezzia. He had been to Pisa to do a kind action, and he was returning to his country abode at Lerici to do another. Such was the whole course of his life. Let those who have known such hearts and have lost them, judge of the grief of his friends. Both he and Captain Williams have left wives and children. Captain Williams was also in the prime of life and a most amiable man, beloved like his friend. The greatest thing we can say in honour of his memory (and we are sure he would think so), is, that he was worthy to live with his friend and to die with him.—Vale, dilectissime hominum! Vale dilectissime; et nos ama, ut dixisti, in sepulchro.”

As stated before, Whitton knew of Shelley's death on August 3rd, for on that date he communicated the news to Sir Timothy, and he wrote again on the same subject on August 5th, having no doubt in the mean-

## The Paradise of Exiles

time seen the *Examiner* notice. The lawyer's letters are not forthcoming,<sup>1</sup> but Sir Timothy's reply which follows shows more anxiety for his younger son John's future career than for the loss of his elder son.

*Sir Timothy Shelley to William Whitton*

FIELD PLACE,  
Aug. 6, 1822.

MY DEAR SIR,—The Sting of Death has its effects. God's will be done ! Tho' we have it from the Public Papers only at present, such catastrophies are apt to be too true.

In regard to the enquiries you mention, I leave to you. John at present requires a steady young man as his Tutor, where, if He could be found to form a Friendship with Instruction, and masters for employment.

I was most perfectly satisfied with Mr. Warnford, but the Clergyman of the Parish form'd a Friendship for John and I fear has not been that Friend that could be wished, His prospects being held up to him that do not accord with my wishes. Could I beg of you to write to me that John might see the letter that this unforeseen event has chang'd the face of circumstances in my family, that he must think of something in order to better his condition in Life.

It is wonderful what artful men there are in the world, and those whom you may consider Friends confidentially are grounding the mischief of youth.

May I once more request to hear from you upon the above subject, it wd. be of Service at this period

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Whitton's letter-book for this period is missing.

## Shelley in England

of Time. Lady Shelley and my Family offer their best Compts.

Believe me, My dear Sir,  
Yrs. most Faithfully,  
T. SHELLEY.

I open'd the letter that I omitted to mention I had form'd the intention of sending John to a Gentleman at Sutton Coldfield, Nr. Birmingham, and was abt. to take him, He takes 4 only, but we see Private Tutors cannot keep youth in order where there are others. I must find some person if possible, whatever I do about this gentleman. He is highly spoken of by a friend of mine.

With Sir Timothy's next communication to Whitton (August 8th) he sent him two letters. One was from Shelley's friend T. L. Peacock, and the co-executor with Byron of the poet's will, giving Sir Timothy the first personal intimation of his son's death, to which he seems to have been quite prepared to resign himself, although he displayed some concern for his suit of mourning. The other letter was from Mr. Holste, who wrote on behalf of the representatives of the late Miss Hitchener. Sir Timothy concluded that Holste had written to him after having seen a public announcement of the poet's death.

*Sir Timothy Shelley to W. Whitton*

FIELD PLACE,  
Aug. 8, 1822.

DEAR SIR,—I have given up my intention going to London at present, not having my mourning, and

## The Paradise of Exiles

thè etiquette here not to appear in Public, except in case of necessity until we have been to Church : and under the peculiar circumstances the general acceptation of the world may be set at rest in regard to the Family.

I have therefore enclos'd you the letters. I have no knowledge of either of the Gentlemen.

I have not written even to Mr. Peacock. I mention'd before, if it seem'd right to give him a line to thank him for the communication being the only information, but thro' the Public Papers.

The other Gentleman must have seen the account, tho' he does not give any hint of it, but after so long a period writes to me.

This Miss Hitchener was a School Mistress and after Bysshe was married, went to see them. He knew her first at Cuckfield, when he was at Captn. Pilfold's before he married.

I have no doubt but you will find both the marriages correct. He was particular in that respect—I suppose there will require some arrangement when matters are understood.

To lose an eldest son in his life time and the unfortunate manner of his losing that life, is truly melancholy to think of, but as it has pleas'd the Great Author of our Being so to dispose of him I must make up my mind with resignation.

Believe me yrs. most truly and faithfully,

T. SHELLEY.

[Addressed]

WM. WHITTON, Esq.,  
No. 3, King's Road,  
Bedford Row, London.

# Shelley in England

*T. L. Peacock to Sir Timothy Shelley*

EAST INDIA HOUSE,  
Aug. 6, 1822.

SIR,—I am sorry to be the medium of conveying to you the afflicting intelligence which I have this day received in a letter from a friend of Mrs. Shelley in Italy, in which country your son has resided during the last four years. In that letter I am requested to communicate to you the melancholy tidings of his having perished at sea, in a storm, while proceeding along the coast in an open boat from Pisa to Lerici. He had not insured his life, and his widow and her infant son are left without any provision.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

T. L. PEACOCK.

TO SIR TIMOTHY SHELLEY.

*H. Holste to Sir Timothy Shelley*

LONDON. Aug. 6, 1822.  
22, BUSH LANE.

SIR,—I hope you will excuse the liberty I take in addressing you respecting a Debt owing by your Son Mr. Percy B. Shelley to the Estate of the late Miss Hitchener of Edmonton. I am the Executor and have written to Mr. Shelley at Pisa, where I am informed he is at present residing, but have not received any answer.

The Debt amounts to £100, which Miss Hitchener lent him in June 1812 and which he has subsequently engaged to repay.

The documents relating thereto are in my possession, and also many letters from him and his family.

## The Paradise of Exiles

I make this humble appeal to you, on behalf of the Creditors and under the conviction that you would be so kind to settle this trifle, and should you wish to have the documents inspected by any one here in Town I shall with pleasure lay them before such a person as you may be pleased to appoint; and in the hope of a favorable reply,

I remain most respectfully,

Sir,

Your most obd. and humble Servt.,

H. HOLSTE.

TO SIR TIMOTHY SHELLEY, Bart.,  
etc., etc., etc.,  
Horsham.

There is no mention of a loan from Miss Hitchener in Shelley's correspondence with her during June 1822. In his letter, however, of June 11th, he asked her whether she had enough money for her journey to Wales, where she had decided to visit him and his wife; and if she had not, he said that he would remit some as soon as an amount of £50, then due to him, should arrive. One other reference to money, in Shelley's letters to Miss Hitchener at this time, is contained in his letter to her of June 18th. He contemplated taking a cottage, recommended by Godwin, at Caepstow, and he proposed to journey there with his wife and sister-in-law, Eliza, who was to remain at the cottage while Shelley and Harriet travelled across the country to Sussex, where they proposed to

## Shelley in England

pick up Miss Hitchener and to take her back with them. Shelley calculated that on arriving at Chepstow a sum of £13 would remain to him, with which he would defray the journey to Hurst. But for the expenses of their return to Chepstow—as Shelley said, “We shall be penniless”—he would depend upon Miss Hitchener’s exertions with a certain Mr. Howell. The journey to Chepstow was not undertaken, but it is just possible that Miss Hitchener may have sent him the £100 to which Holste referred, although the amount may have been one year’s instalment of the allowance mentioned below.

Miss Hitchener did not join the Shelleys until after July 14th, on which date she visited the Godwins on her journey through London to Lynmouth, where they had moved in the meantime. She left the Shelleys’ household about November 8, 1812, and Harriet, in writing from Stratford-on-Avon to Catherine Nugent on November 14th, said: “It was a long time ere we could possibly get her [Miss Hitchener] away, till at last Percy said he would give her £100 per annum. And now, thank God, she has left us never more to return.” Shelley wrote to Hogg on December 3, 1812: “The Brown Demon, as we call our late tormentor and schoolmistress, must receive her stipend . . . certainly she is embarrassed and poor. . . .”

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After her departure from the Shelleys' Miss Hitchener returned to Sussex, where the "Newspaper Editor," who contributed his reminiscences of Shelley to *Fraser's Magazine*, "saw her at the house of her father, sitting alone with one of Shelley's works before her. Her fine black eye lighted up, her well-formed Roman countenance was full of animation, when I spoke of Shelley." Medwin spoke of her as "*an esprit fort, ceruleanly blue*," who "fancied herself a poetess. I only know of one anecdote," he said, "which Shelley used to relate, laughing till the tears ran down his cheeks. She perpetrated an ode, proving that she was a great stickler for the rights of her sex, the first line of which ran thus :

"'All, all are men—*women* and all !'"

Mr. T. J. Wise tells me that Mr. Henry James Slack gave him the following information concerning Miss Hitchener from his personal knowledge. He said that she subsequently became governess to the children of a gentleman who held some official position, probably in the diplomatic service, and she accompanied his family to the Continent. Before she left England, however, she deposited with Mr. Slack, Shelley's letters to her, together with transcripts of some of hers to Shelley, and that these papers were never reclaimed. While abroad Miss Hitchener made the acquaintance,

## Shelley in England

and afterwards married, an officer in the Austrian service, but she parted from him soon after, and, returning to England, assumed her maiden name. She then appears to have gone to Edmonton, where, with the aid of her sisters, she kept a school and earned the esteem of her pupils. She left no will, but from a search made at Somerset House it appears that on the 8th March 1822, Letters of Administration of the goods, chattels, and credits of Elizabeth Hitchener, late of Edmonton in the county of Middlesex, Spinster, deceased, were granted to Thomas Hitchener, her natural and lawful father. The estate was sworn at £450 ; the date of her death is not mentioned.

As some misstatements have been made with regard to Mr. Slack, it may be as well to say that he was at one time editor of the *Intellectual Observer*, the "Littlejohn" of the *Weekly Times*, author of *Marvels of Pond Life*, *The Philosophy of Progress*, and other books. He died June 16, 1896, and is described in his will as barrister-at-law.

Miss Hitchener's maiden name appears on the title-page of a poem in blank verse entitled *The Weald of Sussex*, which bears the date of 1822. Another volume from her pen, *The Fireside Bagatelle*, containing enigmas of the chief towns of England and Wales, had been previously published in 1818. If the correspondence of Shelley with Miss Hitchener, to which Mr. Holste

## The Paradise of Exiles

referred, was the same as that in Mr. Slack's hands, or which came into his keeping afterwards, the letters acknowledging the debt are not forthcoming. Some forty years later Mr. Slack showed the letters to Mr. W. M. Rossetti, who was the first to examine and transcribe them.<sup>1</sup>

Among the few contemporary statements of Shelley's death, the following appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September 1822. It was evidently written by someone better acquainted with the facts of the poet's death than with his work and aims.

“PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, ESQ.

“*July 8th.*—Supposed to have perished at sea in a Storm somewhere off Via Reggio on the coast of Italy between Leghorn and the Gulf of Spezzia, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Esq.

“He went out a sailing in a little schooner in company with his friend Captain Williams son of Captain John

<sup>1</sup> Mr. D. F. MacCarthy, in his *Early Life of Shelley*, 1872, made considerable use of these letters, but they were first printed fully for private circulation in 1890 by Mr. T. J. Wise, and were published later, in 1908, by the late Mr. Bertram Dobell with an interesting introduction. The letters were afterwards included in the present writer's edition of Shelley's correspondence, 1909, after collation with the originals, which made it possible to restore some passages hitherto unprinted. On the death of Mr. Slack, the Shelley-Hitchener letters came into the hands of his widow, who bequeathed them to the Rev. Charles Hargrove, the husband of her niece, with the request that he should leave the letters to the British Museum. Mr. Hargrove did not keep the manuscripts long in his possession, but generously presented them to the Museum in 1907.

## Shelley in England

Williams of the Hon. East India Company Bengal Infantry and lately exchanged from the 8th Dragoons to the 21st Fusiliers. He had been to Pisa and was returning to his country abode at Lerici. The boat has since been found capsized. Mr. Shelley was the eldest son of Sir Timothy Shelley, Bart., M.A. of University College Oxford of which Society his son was for a short time a member. He married a daughter of Mr. Godwin by the celebrated Mary Wolstonecraft and was an intimate friend of Lord Byron and Mr. Leigh Hunt. The wives of Mr. Shelley and Mr. Williams were both at Leghorn overwhelmed with grief.

“ Mr. Shelley is unfortunately too well known for his infamous novels and poems. He openly professed himself an Atheist. His works bear the following titles :—*Prometheus chained*, *Alastor or the spirit of Solitude*, and other poems 1816, *Queen Mab*, *Cenci*. It has been stated that Mr. Shelley had gone to Pisa to establish a periodical work with the assistance of Lord Byron and Mr. Leigh Hunt.”

This reference to the memory of England's greatest lyrical poet is mild compared with what followed in this periodical, which claimed to represent the interests of gentlemen and to voice their views. Shortly after the appearance of the obituary notice quoted above, the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* seized an opportunity of assailing Shelley's memory in reviewing an Elegy on his death by John Chalk Claris, a great admirer of the poet, who wrote under the pen-name of “ Arthur Brooke.”

## The Paradise of Exiles

“ Mr. Brooke, an enthusiastic young man who has written some good but licentious verses, has here got up a collection of stanzas for the ostensible purpose ‘ of commemorating the talents and virtues of that highly gifted individual Percy Bysshe Shelley ’ (Preface).

“ Concerning the talents of Mr. Shelley we know no more than that he published certain convulsive caperings of Pegasus labouring under cholic pains ; namely some purely fantastic verses in the hubble bubble toil and trouble style, and as to Mr. Shelley’s virtues, if he belonged (as we understand he did) to a junta, whose writings tend to make our sons profligates, and our daughters strumpets, we ought as justly to regret the decease of the Devil (if that were possible) as of one of his coadjutors.

“ Seriously speaking however we feel no pleasure in the untimely death of this Tyro of the Juan school, that pre-eminent academy of Infidels Blasphemers Seducers and Wantons. We had much rather have heard that he and the rest of the fraternity had been consigned to the Monastery of La Trappe for correction of their dangerous principles and expurgation of their corrupt minds.

“ Percy Bysshe Shelley is a fitter subject for the penitentiary dying speech than a lauding elegy, for a muse of the rope rather than that of the cypress ; the muse that advises us ‘ warning to take by others’ harm and we shall do well.’ ”

If these, and other abusive articles on the poet, were not responsible for Sir Timothy’s unfriendliness to Mary Shelley and her little boy, they no doubt helped to embitter him.

## Shelley in England

But to return to Italy. About July 20th, immediately the fate of Shelley and Williams was known, Mary, Jane Williams, and Clare were taken by Trelawny to the Hunts' at Pisa, and there they remained during the early days of their mourning. Trelawny was unceasing in his efforts to help and comfort them, and Leigh Hunt and his wife also were ever ready with their sympathy and kind attentions. Shelley's widow and the Hunts having agreed to settle together at Genoa for several months, Mary set out from Pisa with Jane Williams for that place, towards the middle of September, in order to seek for a suitable house. She had promised at the same time to find a house for Byron, and she took for him the Casa Saluzzo at Albaro, near Genoa, and the Casa Negroto close by for the Hunts and herself. Clare had previously left Pisa for Vienna to join her brother Charles, and Mrs. Williams did not remain long at Genoa; she left for London on September 17th. Consequently Mary remained with her boy at the Hunts', intending also to return to England, but realised that, when she was able to do so, she could not reasonably be a burden on her father.

Mary cherished hopes that Sir Timothy would help her for the sake of her boy, but, as she wrote on September 17th to Mrs. Gisborne, "when my crowns are gone, if Sir Timothy refuses, I hope to be able

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to support myself by my writings and mine own Shelley's MSS."

Byron, who at length arrived at Genoa, had been very kind to Mary at Pisa, where he had visited her from week to week. When she saw him again, for two hours, after an absence of a month, the sound of his voice awakened melancholy thoughts of days that were gone. It carried her memory back to the visit at Geneva in 1816, where, at the Villa Diodati, she had listened to long conversations between him and Shelley; and now, when she heard Byron speak, she listened, as it were, in expectation of hearing the other voice that was for ever silenced.

Byron's character was a strange mixture of generosity and meanness. He had behaved generously to Leigh Hunt in his capacity as Editor of the *Liberal*, as well as to John Hunt the printer of that ill-fated magazine, by making to it several notable contributions. It is true that he expected to obtain profit by the venture, but having given it his support, though he soon had misgivings as to its chances of success, he did not hesitate to carry out his promise liberally. Moreover, after a coolness with Murray, Byron entrusted to John Hunt the publication of *Don Juan* from Canto VI. to the end, and Hunt henceforth published anything that came from the pen of the poet, who found him "a sensible, plain, sturdy, en-

## Shelley in England

during person.”<sup>1</sup> Byron sympathised with Mary; as the friend of Shelley, whose death he sincerely lamented, and as one of the executors of the poet’s will, he was anxious to help her. He therefore wrote to his solicitor, John Hanson, saying that he had desired Godwin to see him with regard to Shelley’s affairs, and that he wished Hanson to apply to Whitton on behalf of Mrs. Shelley to ascertain if any provision had been made for her and her son. Byron added that he presumed that the *last* quarter of the allowance, due on September 1st, would be paid, and he desired Hanson’s opinion of Shelley’s will, and his advice as to what had best be done in the circumstances. Hanson accordingly wrote to Whitton asking for an interview. Whitton, however, who, according to entries in his diary, replied to Hanson on November 22nd, and wrote again to him on the 27th, on December 17th declined to see him, and Hanson then made his application by letter as Whitton had requested. Mary wrote to Clare on December 20th at this stage of the negotiations, “This does not look like an absolute refusal, but Sir Timothy is so capricious that we cannot trust to appearances.”<sup>2</sup> On December 18th Sir Timothy had a consultation about Hanson’s letters and Harriet’s children with Whitton, who gave his advice and re-

<sup>1</sup> Byron to Moore, April 2, 1823; Prothero, vol. vi. 183.

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Letters of Mary W. Shelley*, by Mrs. Julian Marshall, vol. ii. p. 55.

## The Paradise of Exiles

ceived Sir Timothy's instructions, which he communicated two days later to Hanson. The decision was apparently unfavourable to Mary's application, as Byron resolved to plead her cause himself, and addressed a letter to Sir Timothy Shelley. It was one of Byron's generous acts, and the letter is an interesting one for the tribute which it contains to his lost friend. The letter does not appear to have been printed before, and is from a copy among the Shelley-Whitton papers.

### *Lord Byron to Sir Timothy Shelley*

GENOA,  
Jan. 7, 1823.

SIR,—I trust that the only motive of this letter will be sufficient apology, even from a stranger—I had the honor of being the friend of the late Percy B. Shelley, and am still actuated by the same regard for his memory and the welfare of his family—to which I beg leave to add my respect for yourself and his connections. My Solicitor lately made an application to Mr. Whitton a gentleman in your confidence, in favor of Mr. Shelley's Widow and child by his second marriage both being left by his untimely death entirely destitute.

My intimacy with your late son and the circumstances to me unknown 'till after his decease—of my being named one of the Executors in a will which he left but which is of no avail at present—and may perhaps be always unavailable—seemed to justify this intrusion through a third person. I was unwilling to

## Shelley in England

trouble you personally, for the subject is very painful to my feelings and must be still more so to yours—I must now, however, respectfully submit to you, the totally destitute state of your daughter-in-law and her child, and I would venture to add—that neither are unworthy your protection. Their wishes are by no means extravagant, a simple provision to prevent them from absolute want now staring them in the face is all that they seek—and where can they look for it with propriety—or accept it without bitterness—except from yourself?

I am not sufficiently aware of Mr. Shelley's family affairs to know on what terms he stood with his family, nor if I were so should I presume to address you on that subject. But he is in his grave—he was your Son—and whatever his errors and opinions may have been—they were redeemed by many good and noble qualities.

Might I hope, Sir, that by casting an eye of kindness on his relict and her boy it would be a comfort to them—it would one day be a comfort to yourself, for if ever he had been so unfortunate as to offend you, they are innocent; but I will not urge the topic further and am far more willing to trust to your own feelings and judgment, than to any appeal which may be made to them by others.

Mrs. Shelley is for the present residing near Genoa—indeed she has not the means of taking a journey to England—nor of remaining where she is without some assistance. That this should be derived from other sources than your protection, would be humiliating to you and to her—but she has still hopes from your kindness—let me add from your Justice to her and to your Grandchild.

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I beg leave to renew my apology for intruding upon you, which nothing but the necessity of so doing would have induced, and have the honor to be,

Your most obedient,

Very humble Servant,

NOEL BYRON.

To SIR T. SHELLEY, Bart.,  
etc., etc.

Sir Timothy sent Byron's letter to Whitton, with an intimation that he thought of allowing Mary a sum of £160 a year.<sup>1</sup> Whitton considered this proposal, wrote several letters to his client, and, finally, had a consultation with Sir Timothy, on February 4th, after he had received from John Hanson certificates of the marriage of Shelley with Mary Godwin and of the baptism of their son Percy Florence. The result of this conference was that Whitton prepared for Sir Timothy a reply to Byron's letter, in the light of a short abstract of the poet's will supplied by Hanson on February 4th, which letter he carefully read over to the baronet on the following day. Mrs. Marshall printed Sir Timothy's reply in her *Life of Mary Shelley*, but the following is given from the draft among the Shelley-Whitton papers, which bears some alterations in Whitton's handwriting, though the two copies are practically identical.

<sup>1</sup> Whitton's diary, January 29, 1823.

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*Sir Timothy Shelley to Lord Byron*

FIELD PLACE,  
Feb. 6, 1823.

MY LORD,—I have received your Lordship's letter, and my Solicitor Mr. Whitton has this day shewn to me copies of certificates of the marriage of Mrs. Shelley and of the baptism of her little boy and also a short Abstract of my son's Will as the same have been handed to him by Mr. Hanson.

The mind of my son was withdrawn from me and my immediate family by unworthy and interested individuals when he was about nineteen, and after a while he was led into a new Society and forsook his first associates. In this new Society he forgot every feeling of duty and respect to me and to Lady Shelley. Mrs. Shelley was, I have been told, the intimate friend of my son in the lifetime of his first wife and to the time of her death, and in no small degree as I suspect estranged my son's mind from his family and all his first duties in life. With that impression on my mind I cannot agree with your Lordship that tho' my son was most unfortunate that Mrs. Shelley is innocent—on the contrary I think that her conduct was the very reverse of what it ought to have been and I must therefore decline all interference in matters in which Mrs. Shelley is interested. As to the child I am inclined to afford the means of a suitable protection and care of him in this country: if he shall be placed with a person I shall approve.

But your Lordship will allow me to say that the means I *can* furnish will be limited as I have important duties to perform towards others which I cannot forget—I have thus plainly told your Lordship my de-

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termination in the hope that I may be spared from all further correspondence on a subject so distressing to me and my family.

With respect to the Will and certificates I have no observations to make. I have left them with Mr. Whitton, and if anything is necessary to be done with them on my part he will I am sure do it.

I have the Honor, my Lord, to be your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

T. SHELLEY.

While Mary was waiting to hear the result of Byron's application to Sir Timothy she received a letter from her faithful and trusty friend Trelawny. He wrote: "There is not one now living has so tender a friendship for you as I have. I have the far greater claims on you, and I shall consider it as a breach of friendship should you employ any one else in services that I can execute.

"My purse, my person, my extremest means  
Lye all unlocked to your occasion.'

I hope you know my heart so well as to make all professions needless."

Mary was touched by this expression of friendship, which subsequently on Trelawny's part developed into something warmer, and she wrote in reply, on January 20th, that she believed he was the best friend she had, and that most truly would she rather apply to him than to anyone else. But she considered for the

## Shelley in England

present she was well off, having received £33 from the *Liberal*, besides still possessing a considerable residue of the money that she had brought from Pisa. She had enough to spare some for Clare. She added : “ Lord Byron continues kind : he has made frequent offers of money. I do not want it as you see.”

Mary was naturally indignant at the proposal of her father-in-law, whose letter plainly showed, she said, in writing to Byron, by what mean principles Sir Timothy would be actuated in not offering her little boy “ an asylum in his own house, but a beggarly provision under the care of a stranger.” She declared that, separated from the child, she should not survive ten days, though the sacrifice would be easy if it were necessary to die for his benefit. But the child was delicate, and required all his mother’s love and solicitude, and she would never consent to part with him. Godwin, who saw a copy of Sir Timothy’s letter, considered that there was no need for him to counsel her to reject her father-in-law’s proposition. It was a bitter blow to her expectations, and she soon realised that, stranded as she was in a foreign country without resources, it was expedient that she should return to England with as little delay as possible. Mary made her preparations, and on June 9th she told Byron that she was ready to depart, and he promised to provide her with money and to make himself the necessary

## The Paradise of Exiles

arrangements for the journey ; but he kept her waiting, and then chose to transact the negotiations through Leigh Hunt. Mary related these details to Jane Williams in a letter dated July 1823, and said that Byron “gave such an air of unwillingness and sense of the obligation he conferred, as at last provoked Hunt to say that there was no obligation, since he owed me £1000.” She added that while Byron was “still keeping up an appearance of amity with Hunt, he had written notes and letters so full of contempt against me and my lost Shelley that I could stand it no longer, and have refused to receive his still proffered aid for my journey.” Mary, who was an inexperienced girl, not twenty-four when she was widowed, being unaccustomed to decide for herself, had outworn Byron’s patience by the incertitude of her plans. Perhaps he was vexed when she showed some irritation at the failure of Byron’s appeal to Sir Timothy ; at any rate he was out of humour with her, and he did not disguise it in the letter which follows.

### *Lord Byron to Leigh Hunt*

*June 28, 1823.*

DEAR H.,—I have received a note from Mrs. S. with a fifth or sixth change of plan, viz. not to make her journey at all, at least through my assistance on account of what she is pleased to call “estrangement, etc.” On this I have little to say. The readiest mode now may be this, which can be settled between

## Shelley in England

you and me without her knowing anything of the matter.

I will advance the money to you (I desired Mr. K[irkup]<sup>1</sup> to say what would enable her to travel "*handsomely and conveniently in all respects*" these were the words of my note this afternoon to him) on Monday—you can then say that you have raised it as a loan on your own account—no matter with whom or how—and that *you* advance it to *her*—which may easily be made the fact if you feel scrupulous by giving me a scrap of paper as your note of hand—thus she will be spared any fancied humiliation. I am not aware of anything in the transaction which can render it obnoxious to yourself—at least I am sure that there is no such intention on my part—nor ever was in anything which had passed between us—although there are circumstances so plausible—and scoundrels so ready in every corner of the earth to give a colour of their own to everything—the last observation is dictated by what you told me to-day to my utter astonishment—it will however teach me to know my company better or not at all.

And now pray—do not apply or misapply directly or indirectly to *yourself* any of these observations.

*I* knew you long before Mr. S. knew either you or me—and you and two more of his friends are the only ones whom I can at all reflect upon as men whose acquaintance was honourable and agreeable. I have

<sup>1</sup> Seymour Kirkup was among those present at Shelley's funeral, on January 21, 1823, when his ashes were laid in the Protestant Cemetery at Rome. He was a friend of Trelawny, who described him as "an artist of superior taste," and he drew his portrait, which will be found in the *Recollections of Shelley and Byron*, 1858. Kirkup seems to have spent the best part of his life in Florence, where he was living in 1870, at the age of 82. See Trelawny's *Letters*, edited by Mr. H. Buxton Forman.

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one more thing to state—which is that from this moment I must decline the office of acting as his executor in any respect, and also all further connection with his family in any of its branches—now or hereafter.

There was something about a legacy of two thousand pounds—which he had left me—this of course I decline and the more so that I hear—that his will is admitted valid : and I state this distinctly—that in case of anything happening to me—my heirs may be instructed not to claim it.

Yours ever and truly, N. B.

*P.S.*—I enclose you Mr. K.'s answer just received to my note of this afternoon.

On July 23rd, two days before Mary quitted Genoa for England, she wrote to Mrs. Williams that Lord Byron, Trelawny, and Pierino Gambo had sailed for Greece on July 17th. She did not see Byron before he left. "His unconquerable avarice," she said, "prevented his supplying me with money, and a remnant of shame caused him to avoid me. . . . If he were mean, Trelawny more than balanced the moral account. His whole conduct during his last stay here has impressed us all with an affectionate regard, and a perfect faith in the unalterable goodness of his heart. They sailed together ; Lord Byron with £10,000, Trelawny with £50, and Lord Byron cowering before his eye for reasons you shall hear soon." Poor as Trelawny was, he willingly lent Mary a sum to help her to defray the expenses of her homeward journey.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### CONCLUSION

Mary's return to London—*Frankenstein* on the stage—Mary and Sir Timothy—Shelley's *Posthumous Poems*—Their suppression—Mary's allowance—John Shelley's marriage—Mary's negotiations with Sir Timothy—Her visit to Paris—Her illness—Percy Florence Shelley and his grandfather—False rumours of Mary's marriage—Trelawny's suit rejected—Mary's Wednesday evenings—Death of William Godwin the younger—Godwin's death—His will—Percy at Harrow—And at Cambridge—Shelley's collected Poems and Essays—Mary and her son on the Continent—Mary's death—Characteristics of Sir Percy Shelley—His death.

THERE was nothing now to detain Mary in Italy ; indeed it was expedient that she should return to England and endeavour to obtain from Sir Timothy an allowance for herself and Percy. On August 25, 1823, she was in London under the roof of her father's house in the Strand, and on the 29th Godwin took her, with her step-brother William, and Mrs. Williams, to the English Opera House to witness a dramatic performance of her novel *Frankenstein*. Godwin had been prompted, by the appearance of this play, to get published for Mary's benefit a new edition<sup>1</sup> of her novel, as he

<sup>1</sup> *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. In two volumes, a new edition. London: Printed for G. & W. B. Whittaker, Ave Maria Lane, 1823. The first edition of this book, in three volumes, was published without the author's name, but it contained a dedication to Godwin which was omitted from this reprint.

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despaired of Sir Timothy doing anything for her. She wrote, however, to her father-in-law and Lady Shelley on her arrival in England, and Sir Timothy sent the letter to Whitton. The lawyer advised, in a letter dated September 1st, that Sir Timothy should reply by referring Mary to his letter to Byron as containing his explanation of all that he intended to do, and that his feelings would not permit him to correspond further on the subject. Whitton thought that such a letter would quiet his client and induce Mary to desist from further troubling him or Lady Shelley. Sir Timothy, however, did not fall in with Whitton's suggestion that he should answer Mary's letter, and Whitton therefore wrote to her on September 3rd. He told her that she was acquainted with Sir Timothy's general sentiments, and that he did "not think it proper to vary or alter that determination which he has already stated." Whitton also informed Mary that, when she had placed her son in that situation which she considered desirable for him, if she would send him particulars he would inquire of Sir Timothy what proportion he would be prepared to pay of the expenses. As Whitton was leaving town, he said that he would see Mrs. Shelley that day.

Mary accordingly, accompanied by her father and her little boy, called on Whitton, and, describing the interview in a letter to Hunt, she said that the lawyer

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" was very polite though long-winded ; his great wish seemed to be to prevent me from applying again to Sir Timothy, whom he represented as old, infirm and irritable. However, he advanced me £100 for my immediate expenses, told me that he could not speak positively until he had seen Sir T. Shelley, but he doubted not that I should receive the same sum annually for my child, and with a little time and patience I should get an allowance for myself." Whitton wrote a long letter to Sir Timothy, in which he gave an account of the conversation that he had had with Mary and her father, and he stated that he made the advance to her as he realised that, as she was wholly without money, and her father not being in a position to assist her, without some present aid she could not keep herself without great distress ; that he thought Sir Timothy might allow a sum not very short of £100 a year for the child, but that she was not to look forward to support from that quarter. Mary seems to have construed Whitton's remarks otherwise ; she expected that her father-in-law would make her an adequate provision. Peacock saw Whitton on November 6th, and stated that Mrs. Shelley had written to him saying that she expected an allowance of £300 a year, to which statement Whitton declared that it was Sir Timothy's intention not to allow her sixpence beyond what was necessary for her child.

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It was, however, arranged by Whitton, in an interview with Peacock some three weeks later, that Mary should receive an allowance of £100 a year from September 1st preceding. But Mary, remembering her conversation with Whitton, still hoped that this allowance would be augmented, and after some months of suspense she must have written to him on the subject, in June 1824, as the lawyer replied to her on the 14th of that month that it concerned him very much that even his most guarded expressions should have produced a feeling of expectation on her part. He pointed out to her that, as under her late husband's will she had an important expectant interest in part of the settled estates, she thus possessed a resource beyond and independently of the allowance made by Sir Timothy for Percy's maintenance. He thought it right to refer her to the consideration of that subject, as she might thereby provide for herself all that she now required. Peacock called on Whitton to ask for an explanation of that part of his letter to Mrs. Shelley which referred her to her own means for obtaining a support. Whitton gave him no encouragement to expect that Sir Timothy would take a grant from Mary of a part of her expectant right in consideration of an annuity, but the lawyer agreed to ascertain, in the circumstances, the value of an annuity of £300 per annum during the joint lives. Mary Shelley

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was led by this inquiry to conclude that some satisfactory arrangement would result, as she wrote to Trelawny on July 28th : “ My prospects are somewhat brighter than they were. I have little doubt but that in the course of a few months I shall have an independent income of £300 to £400 per annum during Sir Timothy’s life, and that with small sacrifice on my part. After his death Shelley’s will secures me an income more than sufficient for my simple habits.”

Soon after Shelley’s death, when Mary was at Albaro, she applied herself to the task of going over his manuscripts and transcribing them preparatory to issuing a collection of his unpublished poems. When she was nearing the completion of her task, she must have experienced a difficulty in finding a publisher willing to undertake to print the book at his own risk. The Olliers, who had issued Shelley’s poems at the author’s charges, had stated that “ the sale, in every instance, of Mr. Shelley’s works has been very confined.” The original editions of his works were, at the time, a drug in the market, and the London publishers showed no eagerness to publish his *Posthumous Poems*. A plan at length was found to induce John Hunt to issue the book. The sale of 250 copies was guaranteed by three admirers of Shelley’s poetry—namely, Thomas Lovell Beddoes ; Bryan Waller Procter, otherwise “ Barry

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Cornwall'' ; and Thomas Forbes Kelsall—none of whom appear to have known the poet personally. The publisher decided to print 500 copies of the volume, as he said that a smaller number would not pay for printing and advertisements, much less yield any profit for Mrs. Shelley. A portrait was to have been added as a frontispiece to the book, but Mrs. Williams had mislaid a sketch of the poet, which Mary Shelley had lent her, until it was too late to use it.<sup>1</sup> It was originally intended to include in the volume a selection from Shelley's prose writings, including some letters from Italy, besides his translation of the Symposium and Ion of Plato, but Mary stated in her preface to the book (dated June 1, 1824) that the size of the collection had prevented the insertion of any prose pieces, which would appear in a separate publication.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the *Poems of T. L. Beddoes*, 1851, edited by T. F. Kelsall, Memoir, vol. i. p. xxiii. ; also *The Letters of T. L. Beddoes*, 1894, edited by Edmund Gosse, p. 1 *et seq.*, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> In an advertisement, dated December 1823, and printed at the end of *Don Juan*, Cantos XII-XIV, 1823, of John Hunt's publications, among "works preparing for publication" is the announcement :

"In one vol. 8vo. The Posthumous Works of the late Percy B. Shelley, Esq. Containing: The Witch of Atlas; Julian and Maddalo; Triumph of Life; Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude. Translations:—The Cyclop, a Silenic Drama from Eurypides [*sic*]; Homer's Hymn to Mercury; The Symposium and Ion of Plato, &c. Letters from Italy; and smaller poems." In the next volume of *Don Juan*, Canto XV-XVI, 1824, the advertisement, dated March 1824, again appears among works in preparation, but "Letters from Italy" and "The Symposium" are omitted, and "From the Faust of Goëthe" [*sic*] is added.

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The book on the whole was received favourably by the reviewers, who were forced, though sometimes unwillingly, to admit that it contained proofs of Shelley's unmatched gift of song. The *Quarterly*, Hazlitt in the *Edinburgh*, and "Christopher North" in *Blackwood*, were agreed in praising the book, but the writer of a long review which appeared in the number for August 1823 of that little known, but very interesting, publication, *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, showed that he was well acquainted with Shelley's poetry, from *Queen Mab* to *Adonais*, and had followed the criticisms which had been meted out to it in the past. He said :

"Amidst the crowd of feeble and tawdry writers with which we are surrounded, tantalizing us with a mere shew of power, and rendering their native baldness more disgusting by the exaggerations and distortions with which they attempt to hide it, it is refreshing to meet with a work upon which the genuine mark of intellectual greatness is stamped. Here are no misgivings, no chilling doubts, no reasoning with ourselves as to the grounds of our temporary admiration; no comparison of canons, no reference to criterions of beauty. We feel ourselves raised above criticism, to that of which criticism is only the shadow; we perceive that it is from sources like these that her rules, even where true, are exclusively derived, servants that know not their master's will,—and we feel that we have no need of them, when all that they

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could teach presents itself to us by intuition. It is a reviving feeling—a sense of deliverance and of exaltation ; we are emancipated from the minute and narrowing restraints to which an habitual intercourse with petty prejudices almost insensibly subjects us ; we breathe freely in the open air of enlarged thought ; and we deem ourselves ennobled by our relation to a superior mind, and by the sense of our own capabilities which its grand conceptions awaken in us.”

The writer then went on to examine the charges that had been made against Shelley and his poetry. “ We are a review-and-newspaper-ridden people,” he said, “ and, while we contend clamorously for the right of thinking for ourselves, we yet guide ourselves unconsciously by the opinion of censors whom we know to be partial and incompetent.” The feeling against Shelley was not merely because he had erred, but because his errors were unpopular and he had never attempted to disguise his opinions or to mask them “ under a decent guise of conformity.” The article concludes with several pages of extracts from the poems, and is followed by a lively dialogue between the contributors, at the anniversary gathering of the magazine, on the merits of Shelley’s poetry, on Mrs. Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, and her then recently published novel *Valperga*. The author of the article disguised his identity under the pseudonym of “ Edward Haselfoot,” but the magazine counted among its

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contributors Macaulay, Praed, and Moultrie, and it may have been written by one of the two last named.

The volume of Shelley's *Posthumous Poems* had not been long in circulation before Sir Timothy wrote to Whitton about it. He had attempted during his son's lifetime to restrain him from publishing his works and had failed, but, now that Mary Shelley was dependent on him for supplies, it was an easy matter to threaten to stop her allowance unless she at once withdrew the circulation of her husband's poems. Whitton wrote to Sir Timothy, on July 24, 1824, that he had seen Mr. Peacock, and that he had had a very long and particular conversation with him on the subject of "the publications." Peacock remarked that he was ignorant of Mary's intention to publish, and that had he known it he would have used his endeavours to prevent it. He had heard that she, or, rather, her father, was about to publish some prose writings (apparently of Shelley's), and Whitton, who intimated to him that such conduct had been very offensive to Sir Timothy's feelings, conceived that the baronet would regard "any further publication of the writings as intended to annoy" him and his family. Whereupon Peacock said that he would endeavour to prevent it, and a few days later he again saw Whitton, who wrote to Sir Timothy on August 5th as follows :

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*W. Whitton to Sir Timothy Shelley*

3 KING'S ROAD,  
Augt. 5, 1824.

DEAR SIR TIMOTHY,—The day after I had the pleasure of seeing you I saw Mr. Peacock, and I communicated with him very fully as to the publication of the Poetry and the proposed publication of the prose parts of Mr. Shelley's writings, and having pointed out to him how much such Publications pressed on the feelings of yourself and your family, he expressed to me his great regret that the publication had ever taken place, and that having seen Mrs. Shelley she had authorised him to take any course he might think proper to get in the copies of the Book then under publication and his only difficulty was the expense which had been incurred in the publication ; and I therefore proposed to him that I would make payment of the amount supposing the same did not exceed £100. Mr. Peacock intimated to me that the bargain for the publication had been that Mrs. Shelley was to receive any profits that should arise beyond the expenses of publication, and I had reason to understand that 700 of the Books had been printed. This morning Mr. Peacock again called on me and stated that in consequence of what had previously passed the Advertizements had ceased, that 500 only of the Books had been printed, of which about 300 had been sold, the price for which had cleared the expenses and advertisements, that about 30 were in the hands of Booksellers at Edinburgh and Dublin which he would immediately cause to be recalled, and the remaining 170 he proposed to send to me ; there are about 7 in the hands of Booksellers in different parts of the Town

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which we thought it would not be prudent to apply for. Upon consideration I deemed it would be more expedient, and I therefore stipulated with Mr. Peacock that the 170 Volumes and the manuscript of the Work as well as the Manuscript of the prose writings should be placed in his hands as a more perfect means of satisfaction to you and your family, and this he promised me should be immediately done. I was the more desirous that Mr. Peacock should be charged with the care of the printed Books and the two Manuscripts rather than the Books should be sent to me and the manuscripts left in the hands of indifferent persons. In this way I hope a continuance of annoyance to you will be avoided. The check you sent me dated the 17 of June, 1824, for £50 I did not use in the way you pointed out for the benefit of Mrs. Shelley, and I now return it to you cancelled. Mr. Peacock stated to me that Mrs. Shelley had misapprehended the arrangements as to the payments to her, that she was greatly inconvenienced for the want of money. I therefore paid her £50 for the 1st of Sept. by anticipation. When you have reflected on the circumstances now communicated and considered the subject with Lady Shelley and your family you will be pleased to let me know what you intend doing. I mentioned to Mr. Peacock about the Education of the little Boy, and he expressed his great readiness to assist in inducing Mrs. Shelley to do what may be right in the occasion, he agreeing with me that a Godwin education must be altogether avoided.

Yours Dr. Sir Timothy,

Very faithfully,

WILLIAM WHITTON.

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Mrs. Shelley must have parted reluctantly with Shelley's original manuscripts, but it was expedient to comply with Sir Timothy's demands, and the papers only passed into the custody of her friend Peacock. Of what exactly the manuscripts comprised does not appear from Peacock's letter that follows. The translations from Plato remained unprinted till the year 1840, when they appeared in Mary Shelley's collection of Shelley's *Essays and Letters from Abroad*.

*T. L. Peacock to W. Whitton*

*Aug. 18, 1824.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I have received from Mrs. Shelley the *original* MSS. which were to have composed the prose volume.

There are two *translations* from Plato which she cannot immediately procure from a person to whom she had lent them, and who (it I recollect rightly, having mislaid her note) is out of town.

She assures me that they shall not be printed, and that they shall be sent to me as soon as she can obtain them. I have also received the whole remaining impression of the *Posthumous Poems*, 190 copies.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Very sincerely yours,

T. L. PEACOCK.

INDIA HOUSE,

*Augt. 18, 1824.*

Mary Shelley no doubt consented thus readily to the suppression of the *Posthumous Poems* as the question

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was then pending whether Sir Timothy would advance her a sum of money on her expectant interest under her husband's will. She wrote accordingly to Leigh Hunt on August 22nd :

"A negotiation has begun between Sir Timothy Shelley and myself, by which, on sacrificing a small part of my future expectations on the will, I shall ensure myself a sufficiency for the present. . . . I have been obliged, however, as an indispensable preliminary, to suppress the *Posthumous Poems*.<sup>1</sup> More than 300 copies had been sold, so this is the less pro-

<sup>1</sup> The following is the account of the publishers, John and Henry Hunt, for Shelley's *Posthumous Poems* :

<i>Dr.</i>				<i>Cr.</i>			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Printing 500 copies .	90	11	6	By 500 copies Sheets (as			
„ 26½ Reams of Paper				480 @ 10/-) .	240	0	0
„ @ 30/6 .	40	15	10½	Balance carried forward .	97	6	9½
„ Entering at Stationers'							
„ Hall . . . . .	0	3	0				
„ Advertisements . . .	24	13	9				
„ 11 copies to Stationers'							
„ Hall @ 10/6 . . . .	5	15	6				
„ 41 copies to Mrs.							
„ Shelley @ 10/6 . . .	21	10	6				
„ 10 copies to The							
„ Press @ 10/6 . . . .	5	5	0				
„ 160 copies to Sir T.							
„ Shelley (in sheets)							
„ @ 10/6 . . . . .	80	0	0				
„ 31 copies to Sir T.							
„ Shelley (in boards)							
„ @ 10/6 . . . . .	16	5	6				
„ Recalling from Country							
„ Agents . . . . .	1	6	2				
„ Mrs. Shelley on ac-							
„ count . . . . .	15	0	0				
„ Publishing . . . . .	36	0	0				
	£337	6	9½		£337	6	

To Balance brought forward, £97, 6s. 9½d.

## Conclusion

voking, and I have been obliged to promise not to bring dear Shelley's name before the public again during Sir Timothy's life. There is no great harm in this, since he is above seventy ;<sup>1</sup> and, from choice, I should not think of writing memoirs now, and the materials for a volume of more works are so scant that I doubted before whether I could publish it. Such is the folly of the world, and so do things seem different from what they are ; since from Whitton's account, Sir Timothy writhes under the fame of his incomparable son, as if it were the most grievous injury done to him ; and so, perhaps, after all it will prove. All this was pending when I wrote last, but until I was certain I did not think it worth while to mention it. The affair is arranged by Peacock, who, though I seldom see him, seems anxious to do me all these kind of services in the best manner that he can."

Peacock was certainly vigilant, and he saw Whitton on November 27th in regard to a letter that he had received from Mary respecting her situation and want of means. Whitton gave his advice as to her ability to purchase an annuity for her life, and he promised to furnish her with the necessary evidence if Sir Timothy declined to take part in the transaction.<sup>2</sup> Both Mrs. Shelley and Peacock saw Whitton several times on the subject, and, as Sir Timothy finally declined to take part in her proposed annuity, the lawyer suggested that Peacock should lay the proposal before

<sup>1</sup> Sir Timothy Shelley lived to the age of ninety-one.

<sup>2</sup> From Whitton's Diary, November 27, 1824.

## Shelley in England

some insurance company. Peacock acted on this counsel, but the negotiation proved abortive.

Mary wrote to her friend, Miss Curran, on January 2, 1825, with regard to her affairs: "I have now better prospects than I had, or rather, a better reality, for my prospects are sufficiently misty. I receive now £200 from my Father-in-law, but this in so strange and embarrassed a manner that, as yet, I hardly know what to make of it. I do not believe, however, that he would object to my going abroad, as I daresay he considers that the first step towards kingdom come, whither, doubtless, he prays that an interloper like me may speedily be removed."<sup>1</sup>

The prospect of remaining in London was daily growing more distasteful to her. On April 8th she wrote to Leigh Hunt: "I shall not live with my father but return to Italy and economise the moment God and Mr. Whitton will permit."

Any doubts, however, that Mary may have entertained respecting her income were soon to be dispelled by an unfortunate incident.

Mary had written a novel, during the last years of Shelley's life, of which he entertained a high opinion,

<sup>1</sup> Whitton noted in his Diary on December 26, 1824: "Writing letter to Mrs. Shelley. Gave her cheque for £50." It is not clear whether Sir Timothy had actually entered into an arrangement with Mary to allow her £200 a year, or whether she took this sum to represent a quarterly instalment of a regular allowance.

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and he attempted to find a publisher for it. The book, with the title *Valperga ; or, The Life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca*, was issued during the summer of 1823, shortly before Mary left Italy. The publisher paid her for the manuscript a sum of £400, which she generously gave to her father, who had put the book into shape for publication. It was now imperative that Mary should again employ her pen to eke out her meagre income, and she wrote another novel, *The Last Man*, which was published early in the year 1826. This book, like its predecessor, did not bear Mary's name on the title-page, but was described as "by the author of *Frankenstein*." When Sir Timothy induced Mary to suppress the *Posthumous Poems*, under the threat of stopping supplies if she refused, she hoped that, in recognition of her compliance with his wishes, he would have considered the question of raising money for her benefit. But it was his desire that Shelley's memory might be forgotten, and he made it a condition of continuing the allowance to Mary of £100 per annum that she should not bring her husband's name again before the public. Mary Shelley was pretty widely known to be the author of *Frankenstein*, although originally published anonymously, as her father, in bringing out the new edition of that romance, had put her name on the title-page. The reviewers, therefore, of *The Last Man* freely referred

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to her by name, and this publicity so annoyed Sir Timothy, that he showed his displeasure by suspending her allowance, although Mary was in no wise blameworthy.

Whitton, in sending Peacock a sum of £50 for Mary on July 5, 1826, said that it must be considered the last payment. He added, in the same letter, that Shelley's eldest son by Harriet, Charles Bysshe, was in consumption. Six days later he wrote again to Peacock, and sent him, for Mrs. Shelley's information, the doctor's report on the boy's case, and said: "I regret very much the situation of the little fellow; he has the affectionate attention of Sir Timothy and Lady Shelley and of the young ladies at Field Place. This disaster puts, I fear, a complete negative to the raising by Mrs. Shelley of an annuity upon her expectant interest in the Estates incumbered as they have been."

About the middle of September 1826 little Charles Shelley died, and Mary's son, Percy Florence, became heir-presumptive to the baronetcy. It is pretty clear that there was little love lost between Sir Timothy and Mary Shelley, and he was probably prepared to think of his grandson Percy as an interloper, especially as the boy stood between Sir Timothy's second son John and the baronetcy. John Shelley, although only twenty, was already engaged to be married, and his



JOHN SHELLEY.

*From a photograph in the possession of Sir John Shelley, Bart*



## Conclusion

father, in sending Whitton, on October 15th, a certificate of Charles's burial, wrote with regard to the young man's settlement in life : " You mention'd that you should be enabled during the Vacation to put into writing the several interests of the State of the Family concerns and of the interest, etc., of my son respecting his nuptials. It will be very gratifying to me so to arrange matters that I may see my way to do right, and set him out as circumstances admit. My son will be of age the middle of March next, and young folks do not feel easy apart when all agree upon the point, and at my time of Life my only wish is to make those happy I feel so much interest for, and no delay will be on my part and I am sure not on yours in laying before him in due time his expectations."

John Shelley was married on March 24, 1827, to Eliza, daughter of Charles Bowen of Kilna Court, Queen's County. Some two years later he appears to have done something to upset his father, in whose affections, however, he seems to have had a place that was denied to or forfeited by Bysshe. The exact nature of the trouble is not disclosed, but money was involved. Sir Timothy, in writing to Whitton on August 18, 1829, said : " I wish he had always been as cautious in his dealings and I hope he may be so in future as he is with me : I the rather encouraged it that he may have an example for the future. Would

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not any little memorandum suffice to quiet his fears? I wish once to arrange with him, then he must take care of himself and give me no further trouble. . . . As John mentioned £800 I told him £1000 would be better and the other £500 would be ready giving me some notice. He told me you advis'd him not to be hasty in replacing the £500. We were all young once." He referred to the same subject again on September 4th: "This young man, my son, came to his senses of his own accord, I wish he may always see his way right and see his interest with those who wish him well, amongst whom his Father, and the gentleman who only knows and understands the concerns in which he may have to transact business with. Nothing but the lack of money can make youngsters understand the right use of it." <sup>1</sup>

Peacock's good offices were again requisitioned by Mary to explain to Whitton that her name had not appeared on the title-pages of her books, and that for the publicity that had been given to her she was in no way responsible. Whitton, who acknowledged the truth of these circumstances, said, "The name was the matter; it annoyed Sir Timothy." Although the

<sup>1</sup> John Shelley died on Nov. 11, 1866. His son Edward, born 1827, who became 4th Baronet in 1889 on the death of Sir Percy Florence Shelley, was succeeded as 5th Baronet by his brother Charles, born 1838, father of the 6th and present Baronet, Sir John Courtown Edward Shelley of Avington, Hants, and Field Place, Sussex.

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lawyer would promise nothing, Peacock did not doubt that Mary would at length receive an allowance, "though she might be punished by a short delay."<sup>1</sup>

In writing to Trelawny from Kentish Town, on March 4, 1827, Mary spoke of the extreme severity of the winter, that had carried off many old people. Sir Timothy had been laid up with the gout for ten weeks, but he had recovered. "All that time," she continued, "a settlement for me was delayed, although it was acknowledged that Percy, now being the heir, one ought to be made; at length after much parading they have notified me that I shall receive a magnificent £250 a year, to be increased next year to £300. But then I am not permitted to leave this cloudy nook. My desire to get away is unchanged, and I used to look forward to your return as a period when I might contrive—but I fear there is no hope during Sir T.'s life. He and his family are now at Brighton. John Shelley, dear S.'s brother, is about to marry, and talks of calling on me."

Mr. Whitton went to Brighton to see Sir Timothy, who talked over with him Mrs. Shelley's situation. On his return to London the lawyer saw Mrs. Shelley and Peacock, and wrote to Sir Timothy, on March 29th, that he "intimated to them the kind intention you had of affording protection to her and the child

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Marshall's *Life of Mary Shelley*, vol. ii. p. 150.

## Shelley in England

of a limited annual amount, under the sum you mentioned to me, because I thought it most prudent to reserve a portion for the increasing expenses of the little Boy and she seemed extremely gratified in your kindness. It was then agreed that a security should be prepared for what had already been paid amounting to about £1000, that is £750 by yourself, the residue by me and for the future advances." After some tedious negotiations with Whitton and Amory & Colc—the lawyers representing Peacock as Shelley's sole surviving trustee, in which Peacock displayed exemplary patience—the business was ultimately arranged. While these details were under discussion, Sir Timothy wrote, on April 1st, to Whitton :

“ My motive for arranging with your assistance for Mrs. S. when I had the pleasure of seeing you at Brighton, was to set her above the evils of pecuniary want, and whatever I may feel under the general circumstances, I can never harbour within my breast unchristian-like Feelings towards her, but to make the best of existing things, and acting upon principle and rectitude. Mr. Peacock, her Friend, will no doubt be influenced by the same Motives, and as you are aware of the best to be done, I have only to add, that her Friend may be assur'd, you have ever been a powerful advocate in her favour, and nothing but what is honourable and just would be proposed.

“ I forbear to enter into past events, but look to what is just and may be so made appear to all parties.

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“Except on a point of positive Law I have not for a long time held the opinion of Counsel in much estimation. I hope the justness of any case I may have to do with may be the rule.

“Having completely conquer’d Gout etc. without the aid of medical advisers, you will as readily conquer the case upon the like principle, Patience and well doing.”

Sir Timothy decided to take a personal part in these negotiations, and Whitton therefore wrote to Peacock, on May 9th, to say that his client was desirous of having an explanation in regard to the security with him, and, if he thought proper, with his solicitor, Mr. Amory; and he added that if he could conveniently bring the little boy Sir Timothy would be glad to see him: “but he particularly wishes not to trouble Mrs. Shelley to call with him.”

A few days after the interview Sir Timothy wrote to his lawyer: “I felt so unman’d and unpleasant feelings at meeting the Little Boy, and the Gentleman with you, and Mr. Amory brought to my recollection the past, that it unfitted me to say more than leaving it, and most properly too, in your hands: It did not appear to me that Mr. Amory brook’d giving way. I trust you will succeed at last, for I am sure you pointed out no more than was just, if she perchance hold under the will. The Little Boy appear’d a child of 5 years of age; he look’d very small, very healthy, and very clean in his person.”

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In handing over the business to be settled by Whitton, Sir Timothy showed that he distrusted the methods of Messrs. Amory & Cole, but he wrote on May 21st that "Mr. Peacock seemed to wish to act properly." The delays were causing Mary great inconvenience, and Peacock therefore drafted a letter for her to send to Sir Timothy, which she copied out and sent to Mr. Whitton.

*Mary W. Shelley to Sir Timothy Shelley*

KENTISH TOWN,  
May 29, 1827.

SIR,—It is the subject of great anxiety to me that the period of my signing the deed drawn by Mr. Whitton is again delayed, and I am the more mortified since it appears that this delay is occasioned by a communication of mine. When Mr. Whitton proposed to me that on the contingency of my inheriting on Bysshe's Will I should repay the sums advanced and to be advanced by you to me and my child, I immediately acceded to the arrangement as being just and proper. Mr. Whitton wished that the deed he should draw should be seen and approved by a Solicitor on my part. Mr. Peacock named Mr. Amory, and Mr. Whitton was satisfied with this nomination. As soon as the affair was put into the hands of a Solicitor, I of course considered myself obliged to act under his directions, and in consequence of Mr. Amory's objections all this delay has occurred.

For myself I do not hesitate to say that I put every

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confidence in you, Sir Timothy, and that I feel perfectly secure that my interests are safe in your hands, and I am ready to confide them to your direction. It is hard therefore that while I am satisfied with the arrangements you make, that the objections of my advisers should subject me to the dreadful embarrassments with which I am now struggling. It was in February last that Mr. Whitton announced to me your intention of allowing me £250 p. ann., since then I have received no supply. I have lived on credit—the bills incurred are now presented for payment, and neither have I funds to defray them nor any by which I can continue to exist.

I do not understand business : and I do not mean to bring this subject before you as a question of business. The interest you shewed for my son encouraged me in the hope that you also will be desirous of facilitating my earnest wish of bringing him up properly. I consider it perfectly right that I should repay the sums you advance to me for his support, but the means for his support I can only obtain through you. I am sure that you will not permit a question of forms merely to interfere with the welfare of your grandson and the respectability of his mother. It is a great misfortune to me that I am not permitted to see you. It would have been a great happiness if, left a widow, I could have been under the protection of Bysshe's father. This good is denied to me : but let me entreat you to enter into my situation and not to delay in relieving me from the humiliation and distresses to which I am subjected. I believe that Mr. Whitton feels assured that confidence may be safely placed in me and will not advise any further postponement in the desired settlement.

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Let me entreat you therefore, Sir Timothy, to direct that the deed in question may be immediately prepared for my signature. Every day is of consequence to me: your kind feelings will, I do not doubt, cause as few to intervene as possible before I am relieved from my embarrassments.

Percy is quite well, and often speaks of you: I hope it will not be long before he has the honour of seeing you again.

I am your obliged and obt. servant,

MARY SHELLEY.

This letter did not meet with Whitton's approval, and one gathers from Mary's next letter that he excused himself from sending it on to Sir Timothy on account of some domestic trouble under which he was suffering at the time.

*Mary W. Shelley to W. Whitton*

KENTISH TOWN,  
*June 4, 1827.*

SIR,—I am sorry that my letter to Sir Timy Shelley is not satisfactory. I beg you will attribute my failure to my utter ignorance of business and my not knowing exactly what it was necessary that I should say.

I thought that when I expressed my perfect confidence in Sir Timothy, and my readiness to sign the deed in question, that I should efface any disagreeable impression made by my letter to Mr. Amory.

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The explanation of that letter is simple. I had, at your wish, confided the conduct of my affairs to Mr. Peacock.

I copied the letter—which certainly when he composed he had no intention it should contain any expressions offensive to Sir T. Shelley. You told me that it conveyed the idea that a foundation was to be laid by it for a suit in Chancery—I am sorry it should have been so ill worded—I utterly disclaim any such intention or thought on my part—I beg to retract any expressions that would give rise to such an idea, or that detract at all from the perfect confidence I feel in Sir Timothy.

I trust that my present communication fills up any omission in my last. If not, and if you will let me know that such is the case, I will call on you at any hour you will appoint that I may learn by what act or word of mine I can bring this painful negotiation to a conclusion.

I am most anxious to make the required concessions and to sign the deed—My situation is one of struggle and embarrassment—Besides the debts I have been obliged to incur—I made arrangements (when on the interview of Sir Timy with Messrs. Peacock and Amory, I thought the negotiation on the eve of terminating) to quit Kentish Town. I cannot delay my departure more than a fortnight or three weeks—and yet without money I cannot discharge my bills here—Permit me to request as a personal favour to myself that you would kindly use your influence with Sir Timothy—and as speedily as circumstances will permit make such communication to him as will bring this distressing delay to a termination.

May I be allowed to ask what the circumstance is

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to which you allude as having occurred in Sir Tim's family.

I am, Sir,

Your obt. Sevt.,

MARY W. SHELLEY.

Sir Timothy agreed at length to advance a sum upon Mrs. Shelley's bond, with the provision that the amount was to be repaid to his estate on his death with interest at 5 per cent. This sum was to provide her with an annual income, to commence on September 1st, which was first fixed at £250, and was subsequently to be augmented when later she would have to meet the increased expenses of her son's education. According to Mrs. Marshall, Mary was staying during most of the autumn of 1827 at Arundel in Sussex, "with, or in the near neighbourhood of her friends, the Miss Robinsons. There were several sisters, to one of whom, Julia, Mrs. Shelley was much attached."<sup>1</sup> While in Sussex Mary wrote to Whitton, on August 15th, from Sompting, near Shoreham, and said she desired to express "her grateful thanks" to Sir Timothy "for his attentions to my poor boy and his kindness towards myself. Percy is very well indeed. The fresh country air and sea baths have added to his look of perfect health. This makes me the less

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Mary W. Shelley*, by Mrs. Julia Marshall, vol. ii. p. 183.

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regret a short delay in putting him to School. Mr. Peacock has meanwhile promised to make enquiries concerning one: My plan is that it should be at a short distance from town and that I should reside close to it. This will be quite necessary at first while he is a day scholar, and afterwards I should not choose to be at any distance from him." Mary found a school for Percy, kept by a Mr. Slater, at Kensington, where she sent him on March 25, 1828.<sup>1</sup> She now saw an opportunity of gratifying her long-cherished desire to take a holiday on the Continent. During Percy's Easter holidays, on April 8th, she wrote to Whitton: "A friend of mine has arrived from the South at Paris, and intends immediately almost to proceed to Germany. As I desire very much to profit by this only opportunity I shall have of seeing her, I intend going to Paris the day after I take Percy back to school (next Thursday). As I shall be exceedingly anxious to return to him, I shall not remain away more than three weeks. The opportunity is the more desirable as I join other friends who are going."

On April 11th Mary wrote in her diary: "I depart for Paris sick of heart yet pining to see my friend" (Julia Robinson). According to the statement of one who knew Mary, in a book entitled *Traits of Character*, "Honour to the authoress and admiration for the

<sup>1</sup> The school is now the Church House to the Carmelite Church.

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woman awaited her" in Paris. Mary, however, was both depressed and ill on her journey, and little wonder; for, as she wrote in her diary, she was sickening of the smallpox, with which she was confined to bed as soon as she arrived in Paris, and although the nature of her disaster was concealed from her till her convalescence, she was not so easily duped. Her illness was succeeded by buoyant health and spirits. Though, she said, "a monster to look at," she endeavoured to make herself agreeable to her friends in Paris, "who were very amiable."

Mrs. Shelley stayed at Dover for a few days, on her return from the Continent, for the benefit of the sea-bathing.<sup>1</sup> During her absence she had heard the gratifying news that Sir Timothy had been to see Percy at his school in Kensington. He was much pleased with the little boy, so she was told by Whitton, who believed that Lady Shelley and the Miss Shelleys—then staying in London—also visited Percy. Whitton had also heard that Sir Timothy stated that the child should have lessons in dancing. Mary showed in her letters that she was very anxious her boy should see his grandfather at regular intervals. The old gentleman did meet him from time to time, but it does not appear that he ever gratified Mary's desire

<sup>1</sup> Mary was at Dover on June 4, on which date she wrote to Whitton from that place.

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to receive her, although she made frequent attempts to break down his reserve.

In the following letter to a friend of her girlhood, formerly Isabel Baxter, Mary described her illness and her visit to Paris. It would be interesting to identify the name of the young French poet who was so attracted to Mary. There were so many young poets at that time in Paris, each of whom was considered the cleverest man in France.

### *Mary W. Shelley to Mrs. Isabel Booth*

DOVER, *June 15* [1828].

MY DEAR GIRL,—You will have heard from Mrs. Godwin of my hateful illness and its odious results. Instead of returning to town as I most exceedingly desired—to join my friends there, and to see again dear Isabel—I am fain to hide myself in the country, and as I am told sea bathing will assist materially the disappearance of the marks, I remain on the coast.

I shall long to see you again—to relate and to hear a thousand histories—if I make a longer stay in the country than I now intend perhaps you will join me—but I mean now to return with Percy at the end of his holidays, that is, at the end of July.

I was sickening of my illness when I left town—my journey was so painful that I shudder at the recollection, and I arrived only to go to bed. What will you say to my philosophy when at the end of three weeks in brilliant health but as ugly as the — I went into society—I was well repaid for my fortitude,

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for I am delighted with the people I saw—and some I love and they merit my affection. What will you say also to the imagination of one of the cleverest men in France, young and a poet, who could be interested in me in spite of the mark I wore—It was rather droll to play the part of an ugly person for the first time in my life, yet it was very amusing to be told—or rather not to be told but to find, that my face was not all my fortune.

I have excellent news of my darling boy, whom I long to see again—I hope you are well—Mrs. G. mentioned in her last letter that your children had called there and that all seemed well with you. When I last saw you, dear friend, I very little anticipated this long separation—not at all did I fear that I should avoid London on my return from Paris—instead of seeking it as I intended as speedily as possible—Patience! my malady has made me lose a year of my life—but in spite of the marks that still remain (I am in no danger of permanent disfigurement) I am in good health—and so different from my dreary state all last winter—and looking younger than when you saw me last.

Write to me, dearest, and direct to me at J. Robinson, Esq., Park Cottage, Paddington—and your letter will be forwarded—Early next week I go to Hastings.

My love to Isabel and Kate and remembrances to Mr. Booth.

Affectionately,

M. S.

Have the goodness, love, to put the enclosed in the *twopenny post* for me.

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Mary expected that her yearly allowance would have been increased to £300 on sending Percy to school, and she put her case before Whitton for reference to her father-in-law. Until her request was granted she addressed frequent letters to the lawyer, who, loath to give his client the trouble of following the correspondence, only applied to him when compelled. But the subject irritated Sir Timothy, who at length grew testy and wrote: "I must entreat to leave this very troublesome woman to your judgment in respect to Finances. . . . What a wonderful assembly of animals I have to deal with."<sup>1</sup> Of Mary's letters he said: "They are couched in terms far from my approbation, and I trust you will be spared the repetition. I have every sentiment of wishing well to her and the little boy, and that there may be no further trouble given you, under the circumstances I will advance £300 per annum from the 1st day of June 1829."<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Shelley told Whitton, in a letter written on December 2nd, that Percy was receiving lessons in drilling, with a view to curing him of a tendency to stoop. She could not resist a little thrust at her father-in-law, and added: "I think Sir Timothy would find him [Percy] improved and he is really very good and above all tractable, which is not quite the virtue of his father's family."

<sup>1</sup> Sir T. Shelley to Whitton, January 19, 1829.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1, 1829.

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On her return to London Mary went to stay with her friends the Robinsons at Park Cottage, Paddington. She repeated her visits to them on many occasions, and on September 1, 1830, she wrote a letter from their address to Whitton on some matter of business. Her friendship with the Robinsons gave rise to a rumour that must have caused her annoyance. Whitton wrote to Sir Timothy, on November 1, 1830, that a person had come into his room and told him, among other things, that "Mrs. Bysshe Shelley had married a person named Robinson," and on inquiry the lawyer obtained the impression, which appears to have had no foundation, that she had lately changed her residence to the house of a person of that name. Sir Timothy replied that Mrs. Paul, wife of the banker's son, while on a visit to Field Place, had spoken of Mary and her little boy, whom she expected to see, whereupon Sir Timothy requested her to take the child a sovereign. The gift was acknowledged in the following letter of thanks to Sir Timothy, who described it as "dictated artfully"; and he added, with regard to the child's remark that he hoped he should some day be allowed to pay a visit to his grandfather: "On no account whatever would I take the boy. I felt so much on the death of Charles." Sir Timothy thought that Mrs. Paul might be able to solve the question of Mary's sup-

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posed marriage. Whitton, however, on making the next payment to Mary, asked her the question, and she declared that she was not married, and there the matter rested.

### *Percy Florence Shelley to Sir Timothy Shelley*

33 SOMERSET ST.,  
12th of November, my birthday, 1830.

MY DEAR GRANDPAPA,—I am very much obliged to you for your kindness in thinking of your little grandson, and in sending me a fine bright sovereign, and I shall think of the goodness of my dear Grandpapa each time I buy any pretty thing with it.

When shall I see you again? I hope soon. As I get on at school, and I hear Mr. Slater is satisfied with me, perhaps some day you will be so very good as to let me pay you and my Grandmama a visit in the country. I am learning to draw, and I like drawing better than any other lesson. I shall buy a box of paints with some of the money you have given me.

Pray give my duty to Lady Shelley and my love to my aunts. I hope, dear Grandpapa, that you will love me, and I will try always to be a good boy. Some ladies friends of Mama who know you, say I am very like you, so I am sure I ought to be good.

I am, my dear Grandpapa,  
Your dutiful grandson,  
PERCY FLORENCE SHELLEY.

Mary Shelley did not marry again, but she received from Trelawny, then her devoted friend and constant

## Shelley in England

correspondent, an offer of marriage in 1831. To him she wrote, on June 14th of that year : " Do you think I shall marry ? Never,—neither you nor anybody else. Mary Shelley shall be written on my tomb,—and why ? I cannot tell, except that it is so pretty a name, that though I were to preach to myself for years, I never should have the heart to get rid of it." In a subsequent letter to him she was equally emphatic : " My name will never be Trelawny." Although his attitude towards Mary underwent no immediate change, Trelawny did not remain constant in his devotion ; he seems gradually to have forgotten his former regard for her, and after her death he gave expression to some ungenerous thoughts of the woman whom he once wooed with fervour.

During these years, when Mary was employed in trying to exact from her father-in-law a few additional pounds to her allowance, it is not to be supposed that she lived in seclusion. She does not appear naturally to have been a very cheerful person ; on the contrary, she was given, when alone, to fits of depression and melancholy. Her days were principally devoted to close literary work, though, so far from boasting of her authorship, she pursued her studies almost secretly, and disliked to be found at work by her friends. What Mary Shelley really loved was society, and although her means did not allow her to give dinner parties or

## Conclusion

to go to the opera, she made her Wednesday evenings at Somerset Street a feature of London literary life. Besides Shelley's old associates—the Hoggs, Peacock, Hunt, and Horace Smith—who hung together chiefly out of regard for his memory, she also numbered among her friends the Lambs, Bulwer Lytton, and Thomas Moore. Trelawny would have been among her supporters, but he was still abroad, as also was Medwin, though he was not specially in Mary's favour on account of his book on Byron and his aspiration to write Shelley's life, a feat which he subsequently accomplished, much to her dismay.

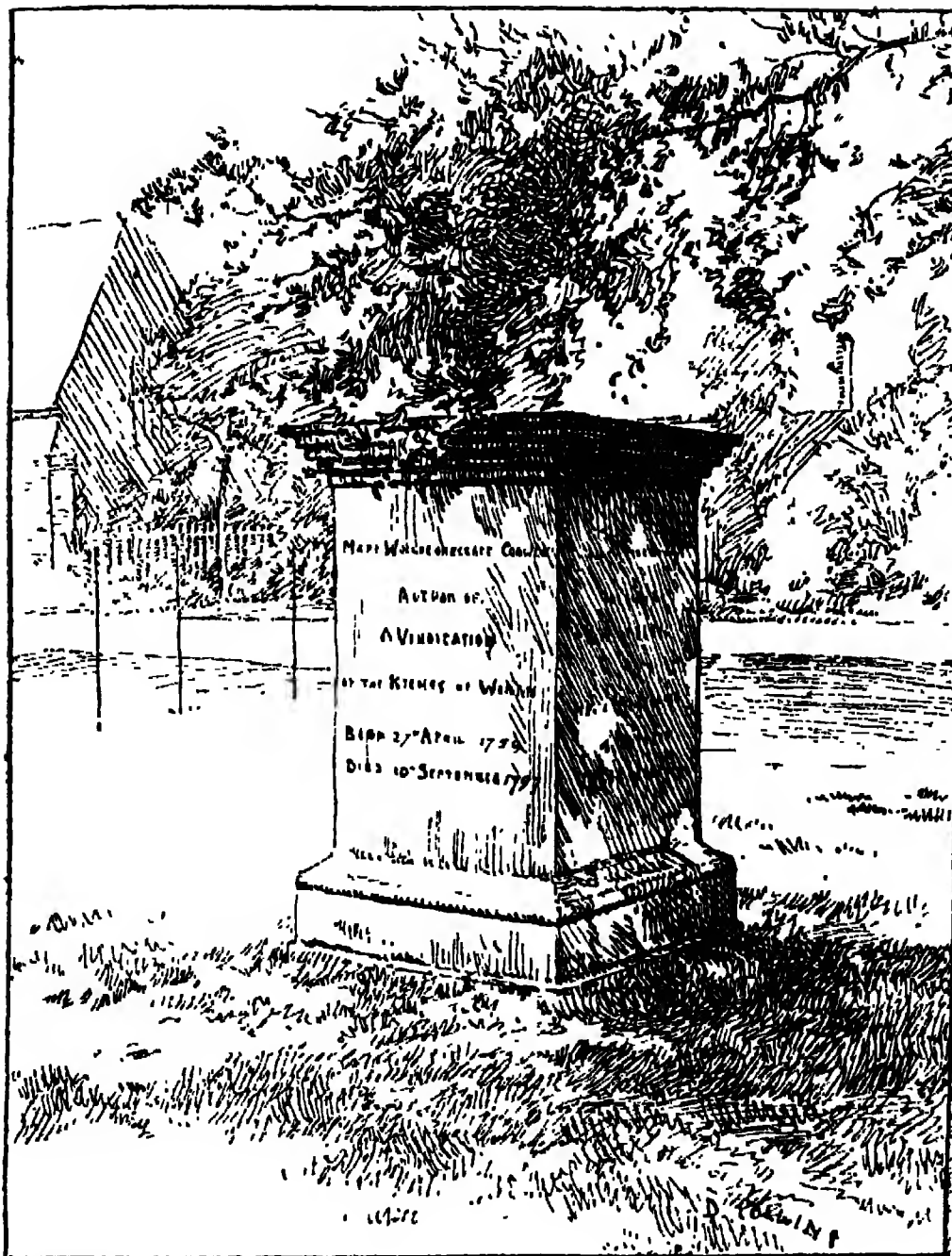
During the cholera visitation to London in 1832 Mary, anxious for the safety of her boy, took him into the country to a place of safety at Sandgate, but her family did not escape unscathed. Her half-brother William, Godwin's only child by his second wife, a promising young man, was carried off by the epidemic, at the age of thirty-one, in the autumn of 1832. At the time of his death he was parliamentary reporter to the *Morning Post*, was happily married, and he had finished a novel, *Transfusion*, the publication of which was arranged, in 1835, by his father, who prefaced the book by a memoir.

The old philosopher, saddened by the loss of his son, had fallen on evil days. With advancing years he found it increasingly difficult to keep the wolf from

## Shelley in England

the door. A subscription had been raised in 1823 for his benefit by his friends and admirers. The shop, never a profitable undertaking, had been abandoned, but Mary helped him whenever she could. At length, in 1833, Earl Grey obtained for him the small sinecure of Yeoman of the Exchequer, with residence in New Palace Yard. The nominal duties of the office were wholly performed by deputies. Shortly after his appointment the post was abolished. Godwin, however, was allowed to retain it through the generous influence of some of his old opponents. He enjoyed his pension for some three years, retaining his faculties to the last. He passed away on April 7, 1836, and was buried, as he had desired, by the side of Mary Wollstonecraft in Old St. Pancras' Churchyard.

Godwin's bones were not allowed to remain long in their resting-place, as the construction of two London railways, which run below and through the churchyard, made it necessary to disturb his grave and that of many others. His grandson, Sir Percy Florence Shelley, caused the remains of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft to be removed in 1851 to the grave at St. Peter's, Bournemouth, where Mary Shelley lies buried. The old four-sided tombstone, where Shelley and Mary plighted their troth in the spring of 1814, is still to be seen in the public garden into which Old St. Pancras' churchyard has been



*From a drawing by D. Collins*

THE TOMBSTONE OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT AND  
WILLIAM GODWIN

IN ST. PANCRAS' BURIAL GROUND



## Conclusion

converted, and where the inscriptions may still be read :

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN, author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

Born 27 April, 1759. Died 10 September, 1797.

WILLIAM GODWIN, author of *Political Justice*.

Born March 3, 1756. Died April 7, 1836. Aged 80 years.

MARY JANE, second wife of WILLIAM GODWIN.

Died June 17, 1841. Aged 75 years.

The following is from a copy of Godwin's will among the Shelley-Whitton papers, and is characteristic of the man who, though he had little to bequeath except the pictures, would not take leave of the world without expressing his last wishes. The pictures, however, proved a valuable inheritance ; that of himself and Mary Wollstonecraft passed to Sir Percy Shelley, and on the death of his widow they found their way to the National Portrait Gallery.

*March 12, 1827.*

It is the Will of me William Godwin, that all the property of which I die possessed, should go to my wife, Mary Jane Godwin, And I request Mr. John Corrie Hudson of the Legacy Office, Somerset House, to take upon him the administration of this my last Will, as sole Executor.

Witness my hand this twelfth day of March one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven.

WILLIAM GODWIN.

## Shelley in England

I leave to my son & my daughter my best and most affectionate remembrances, believing the one to be so provided for by the gifts of nature, & the other by marriage & the will of her late husband that nothing that I could add, could be of any importance to them.—I request them both to accept a book, or set of books from my library, at their own choice, as a slight memorial of that affection, of which I would have yielded more substantial testimony, if fortune had put it in my power to do so.

My portrait by Northcote is the principal memorandum of my corporeal existence that will remain after my death. This is of course included in the above general bequest to my wife. But I should not wish it to go from my children, & therefore after her death, I consider it as theirs. If my son, after my death, should be poor perhaps my daughter would purchase his right in it, at what should be judged by an impartial umpire a reasonable rate. The portrait of her mother by Opie is of course my daughter's: & I should not wish that of Mr. Holcroft to be brought to the hammer. It is further my earnest desire that my daughter would have the goodness to look over the manuscripts that shall be found in my own hand-writing, & decide which of them are fit to be printed, consigning the rest to the flames.

I know not whether any of the letters received by me, will be found proper to accompany my worthier papers. Let her judge.

Unless any substantial reason should be offered for a different destination, it is my desire that my mortal remains should be deposited as near as may be, to those of the author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, in St. Pancras' Churchyard.

## Conclusion

It was Shelley's wish that his son should go to a public school, and Mary suggested, at the end of 1830, that he should be sent to Eton. Sir Timothy, however, would not hear of it, as the place aroused painful memories. In regard to this proposal, he said it "would be highly improper, his Poor Father's being there would make his life very unpleasant. From experience I am aware whatever a boy does at a Public School is remember'd for ages. He had better remain at present where he is." Harrow was then proposed, but was rejected at first as being too near London; but his mother subsequently arranged that he should go there, and he entered the school at Michaelmas 1832. Mrs. Shelley went to live at the town on the hill in the following April, so as to be near Percy, who liked the school and progressed; but not so his mother, who was taken ill there and afterwards pined for the society of her friends in London.

Mr. Whitton, who had commenced these arrangements for Percy's education, did not live to see them completed: he had been ailing for some time, and he died in July 1832. Sir Timothy strongly disapproved of Mary's choice, and grumbled at the expense that she had incurred in placing the boy in a Master's house. He thought that she might have obtained equal advantages at Westminster, Merchant Taylors', St. Paul's, or one of the metropolitan schools, and he

## Shelley in England

declined to listen further to her "importunities" for further help. But she persisted, and Sir Timothy then pointed out that the sum of £6000 which he had agreed to advance would soon be exhausted. "She may not be aware," he wrote to Mr. Gregson, Whitton's successor, in May 1833, "of what may be the residue, and she observ'd too, was I afraid of losing my money. Haughty Dame!"

Mary had evidently thought of putting her son into the law, as Mr. Gregson observed, in a letter to her on December 5, 1835, that it was a very good thing to be a barrister if one possessed industry and perseverance, but that it was a very laborious profession, and without those qualifications success could not be expected in it. He reminded her that the bulk of the property that Percy would inherit was amassed by one of his ancestors who was a lawyer in the Temple,<sup>1</sup> and he added that he should be very glad to see Percy imitate the example. Percy was not, however, destined to be a lawyer. His mother arranged that he should leave Harrow at Easter 1836, and she placed him with a tutor, Mr. Morrison, vicar of Stoneleigh, near Leamington. In writing to Gregson of her intention, she said:

"Percy is in robust health—well-grown—he has

<sup>1</sup> Edward Shelley of Field Place, Warnham (the testator of 1747) was of the Middle Temple.

## Conclusion

good spirits and a good temper. I wish Sir Tim would see him before he goes. It is hard that going into another county—where I am promised that he shall be kindly received—that he should go without any mark of kindness from his Father's family, who were not always estranged from him. He himself remembers that his Grandfather was at one time kind enough to notice him, and wonders why there should be any change now, when the notice would benefit him more."

The care that Mary had bestowed on Percy's training and education was productive of happy results. The youth, who had a good deal of the Godwin placidness in his character, seems to have shown himself worthy of his mother's solicitude. Trelawny had observed in a letter to Mary, that "it is well for mamma, Percy has so much of her temperate blood. When us three meet, we shall be able to ice the wine by placing it between us ; that will be nice, as the girls say." <sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to obtain a view of Shelley's son as he appeared to his mother at the age of seventeen and a half : a greater contrast to his father could not be conceived. The description is taken from a letter which she wrote to Trelawny from Brighton on January 3, 1837 :

"Percy arrived yesterday, having rather whetted than satisfied his appetite by going seven times to a

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Trelawny to Mary W. Shelley, Hastings, Sep. 25, 1836.

## Shelley in England

play. He plays like Apollo on the flageolet, and like Apollo is self-taught. Jane thinks him a miracle! it is very odd. He got a frock-coat at Mettes, and, if you had not disappointed with your handkerchief, he would have been complete; he is a good deal grown, though not tall enough to satisfy me; however, there is time yet. He is quite a child still, full of theatres and balloons and music, yet I think there is a gentleness about him which shows the advent of the reign of petticoats—how I dread it.”

Percy Shelley subsequently went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated B.A. in 1841. We get another glimpse of him, now an undergraduate, and as he appeared in September 1838 to Gregson, who wrote of him to Sir Timothy: “He is rather thick-set; but good-looking, healthy and well-mannered.”

Although the publication of Mary's romance *The Last Man* had been attended with unpleasant consequences, she did not abandon the writing of fiction. Her historical romance *Perkin Warbeck*, published in 1829, was followed in 1835 by a modern novel entitled *Lodore*, which, as Professor Dowden discovered, contains a veiled autobiography describing the author's privations in London during the year 1814.

With the single exception of *Frankenstein*, no one to-day reads Mary Shelley's novels, which have passed to the limbo of the forgotten. Her literary labours

## Conclusion

in another direction have met with better fortune. We have seen that when Sir Timothy Shelley put pressure on Mary to suppress her husband's *Posthumous Poems*, he exacted a promise from her that during his life she would not attempt to bring Shelley's name before the public. She kept this promise, although in 1835 she wrote to tell Mrs. Gisborne that she had received an offer of £600 for an edition of Shelley's works with a *Life* and notes. She added, "I am afraid it cannot be arranged, yet at least, and the *Life* is out of the question."

In the early eighteen-thirties the tide was already turning in favour of Shelley's poetry, and, although there was no authoritative edition of his works, collections of his poems were being circulated by unauthorised publishers. The Galignanis of Paris had issued in 1829 a handsome volume containing Shelley's poems with those of Coleridge and Keats, together with short memoirs and portraits of each poet. The portrait of Shelley was from Miss Curran's picture, which was then in Mary's possession, and it is probable that she assisted the Paris publishers in the arrangement of her husband's poems. Among other editions of Shelley's poems were two volumes of selections brought out in 1827 with the imprint of one Benbow, a notorious London piratical printer. A volume of Benbow's issue fell into Robert Browning's hands

## Shelley in England

when a boy, and the book, which was recently sold at the sale of the poet's library, bore evidences that it had been the object of the deepest study.

By the year 1838, then, the time had fully arrived for the publication of a collected edition of Shelley's poetry, under the editorship of some person of authority. The choice naturally fell to Mrs. Shelley, and she again ventured to approach Sir Timothy Shelley's legal adviser, and with some hope that her plea might be granted. Mr. Gregson, who was apparently a man of broader views than his predecessor Mr. Whitton, wrote on August 4, 1838, to Sir Timothy :

" Mrs. Shelley writes to me, ' When I returned to England nearly fifteen years ago, Sir Timothy made it a condition with me that I should not publish Shelley's Poems. I complied. His motive was that he did not wish his poetry republished ; but this has not prevented the publication, but only prevented me from receiving any benefit from it. Many pirated editions have been published. There is now a question of another edition, which if I were allowed to carry on myself would be very advantageous to me. I wish therefore to learn whether I might.' I am unable to answer this inquiry, and have not said that I should write to you on the subject, but if you have any wish be pleased to inform me. The ' March of Intellect ' since 1815 has probably placed the rising generation in a situation to be little damaged by this poetry, which I have read of, but never read."

## Conclusion

Sir Timothy granted Mary's request, on condition that she did not publish a memoir of Shelley with his poems. She overcame this difficulty, however, by contributing a series of valuable notes to the poems, which contain many biographical facts, and constitute one of the most important sources of information with regard to the poet's life and works. In her preface she explained the aims that guided her in the preparation of the work. She said :

" Obstacles have long existed to my presenting the public with a perfect edition of Shelley's Poems. These being at last happily removed, I hasten to fulfil an important duty—that of giving the productions of a sublime genius to the world, with all the correctness possible, and of, at the same time, detailing the history of those productions, as they sprung, living and warm, from his heart and brain. I abstain from any remark on the occurrences of his private life ; except inasmuch as the passions which they engendered, his poetry. This is not the time to relate the truth ; and I should reject any colouring of the truth."

In dealing with the text of *Queen Mab* a difficulty arose, which Mary explained in the following letter :

*Mary W. Shelley to Leigh Hunt*

41 PARK STREET,  
December 12, 1838.

MY DEAR HUNT,—I am about to publish an edition of our Shelley's Poems, Sir Tim giving leave if there

## Shelley in England

is no biography. I want a copy of the original edition of *Queen Mab* to correct the press from—it must be the *original*—it would not go to the Printers, but only [be] used to correct from. Have you one—or do you know who has—Has Miss Kent? I should be so grateful for the loan. Moxon wants me to leave out the sixth part as too atheistical. I don't like Atheism—nor does he *now*. Yet I hate mutilation—what do you say? How have you been, and when does your Play come out? With love to Marianne,

Yours ever,

M. W. SHELLEY.

Let me have the book quickly—if you have it—as *the press is waiting*.

Mrs. Shelley's edition of her husband's poems was issued in four small volumes (the first of which came out early in 1839), and it was dedicated, with the date of January 20, to Percy Florence Shelley, "by his affectionate mother, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley." She had yielded to the wishes of Edward Moxon her publisher, and omitted from the text of *Queen Mab* the greater part of Canto 6, the whole of Canto 7, and a considerable portion of the notes. Mary soon had reason to regret her compliance, and wrote in her diary on February 12, 1839, that she wished she had resisted her publisher's request, but she had given way when she was told that the inclusion of certain portions of *Queen Mab* "would injure the copyright of all the

## Conclusion

volumes." She had consulted Hogg, Hunt, and Peacock, and they all said she had a right to do as she liked, and they themselves offered no objections. When the book was published, her friends seemed to change their views. Trelawny sent back the volume containing *Queen Mab* to Moxon in a rage, on seeing that the poem had not been reprinted in its entirety. Hogg wrote to Mary an insulting letter because the dedication to Harriet in *Queen Mab* had been omitted.

Mary confided to her diary that Hogg as well as others had misunderstood her. She said that when a copy of Clarke's pirated reprint of *Queen Mab* had reached Shelley, in the year 1821, while he was at the Bagni di Pisa, he was gratified to see that the dedication to Harriet had been omitted.<sup>1</sup> The recollection of this incident had actuated her to leave out the dedication from her reprint. "It was to do him honour," she wrote, "what could it be to me? There are other verses I should well like to obliterate for ever, but they will be printed; and any to her could in no way tend to my discomfort, or gratify one ungenerous feeling. They shall be restored, though I do not feel easy as to the good I do Shelley. I may have been mistaken." Perhaps one of the poems that

<sup>1</sup> Clarke's reprint of *Queen Mab* did contain the dedication to Harriet, but it is absent from some copies and was lacking in the one that Shelley saw.

## Shelley in England

Mary might have wished to suppress was *Epipsychidion*, which, however, she bravely printed, but without a word of comment.

A new edition<sup>1</sup> of the poems was in requisition before the end of the year, and Mrs. Shelley prevailed on Moxon to let her restore the omitted passages from *Queen Mab*, and the dedication. She made some other small additions to and corrections in the text, but she also printed, for the first time, *Peter Bell the Third*, and included *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, which was entirely new to the public; though issued in 1820 during Shelley's lifetime, it had been promptly "stifled at the very dawn of its existence by the Society for the Suppression of Vice." Although this new edition satisfied Shelley's friends, and drew from Trelawny a friendly letter to Moxon of approval and regret for having written his former hasty remonstrance, it led to a Government prosecution in 1841 of Moxon for publishing *Queen Mab*. The case, however, was decided in favour of the publisher, who was ably defended by Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd.

As soon as Mary had prepared the new edition of Shelley's poems, she collected some of his prose writings, among which were *The Defence of Poetry*, the transla-

<sup>1</sup> This edition of Shelley's works in royal 8vo contained the frontispiece portrait of the poet which appeared in the four-volume edition, also a view of his tomb. On this plate is the date of 1839, the title-page bears the date of 1840, and the author's postscript is dated Nov. 6, 1839.

## Conclusion

tions from Plato, and a selection of his admirable letters from Italy; these were published in two volumes in 1840. The severe strain of editing these works of Shelley brought on an illness in the spring of 1839, which Mary bore with fortitude, and from which she happily soon recovered. About the middle of the following year, having completed her work, she was able to leave England, with Percy and a College friend of his, on the first of many tours on the Continent, which is described in her *Rambles in Germany and Italy*. This, her last work, was published in 1844. The travellers visited some of those scenes familiar to Mary in former and happier times—the Villa Diodati, Byron's residence in 1816, and the Maison Chapuis, where Shelley and Mary stayed in that year and where she began to write *Frankenstein*. The houses had remained as they were formerly, but Shelley, Byron, and her little William were gone, while Clare had drifted away. The contemplation of these changes no doubt produced some of those melancholy thoughts to which Mary was too readily prone.

The pecuniary circumstances of Mrs. Shelley and her son were now much improved. Percy came of age in 1840, and in the following year, when he took his degree, his grandfather made him an allowance of £400 a year as a gift without any condition for its repayment. Mr. Gregson, in writing to Sir Timothy

## Shelley in England

on February 20, 1841, spoke of his kindness to his grandson, whom he hoped and believed would be grateful. Percy had called on the lawyer, who had given him his advice in regard to taking up some useful occupation. The young man disliked both the Church and the army, and there only remained the law, which, as Mr. Gregson had before observed, was very "uphill work." He recommended a course of reading preparatory to entering a conveyancer's chambers, in order to know the nature and incidents of the property he was to manage, and to fill the commission of peace, if he did no more.

Much of Sir Timothy's correspondence with Gregson during the latter years of his life was concerned with Stephenson's railway, which ran through a part of the Shelley property. The old baronet died on April 24, 1844. One of Sir Percy Shelley's first acts on succeeding to the title was to pay the legacies under his father's will, and to carry out Shelley's intention of settling an income on Leigh Hunt. Mary Shelley died on February 1, 1851, at Chester Square, where she had kept house with her son until his marriage in 1848, to Jane, daughter of Mr. Thomas Gibson, and widow of the Hon. Charles Robert St. John. Sir Percy settled near Bournemouth about the year 1850, having purchased the Boscombe Manor estates, and he continued to live there for the remainder of his life. If



*By kind permission of Mr. Walter Withall, who took this photograph on the  
boards of the Shelley Theatre, Tite Street, Chelsea, in 1881.*

**SIR PERCY FLORENCE SHELLEY, BART.**



## Conclusion

he did not specially inherit from his parents their literary gifts, he possessed, like his father, a passion for sailing. At his death he was one of the oldest members of the Royal Yacht Squadron, and he had owned successively about a dozen yachts, the names of which were *The Mary*, *Wildfire*, *Ginevra*, *Jane*, *Enchantress*, *Flirt*, *Nokken*, *Queen Mab*, *Extravaganza*, *Wren*, and *Oceana*. The last-named was in his possession at the time of his death, and was a boat of some 250 tons. This yacht was originally named *Thais*, but Sir Percy said that he had given her a more respectable reputation by renaming her *Oceana* as a tribute to Stevenson. Sir Percy was very fond of the Mediterranean, and spent many winters cruising from Gibraltar to the Greek islands and the Black Sea, but he was specially attracted to the Gulf of Spezzia, in the waters of which his father had met his death.

When he was at home, Sir Percy engaged much of his time in the production of plays from his own pen at one of his private theatres ; either at that which he had built at Boscombe Manor or at the theatre in Tite Street, near Shelley House, Chelsea Embankment. He not only provided the plays himself, but he composed the music and painted the scenery with great ability. Sir Percy was a painter of considerable gifts, which were well displayed in his drop scenes. At the opening of the Tite Street

## Shelley in England

theatre one of his drop scenes, used for the first time on that occasion, was described as "Shelley's Last Home," and showed the poet's house at Lerici in the Bay of Spezzia.

These amateur performances, in which Sir Percy and Lady Shelley frequently took part, were often given for some good cause, for he was a liberal supporter of the charitable and religious institutions at Bournemouth, and soon after the Baptist Chapel was built at Boscombe he was to be seen worshipping there from time to time. He has been described to me by one who knew him for years as a versatile and a very lovable man; but one of his peculiarities was his disinclination to talk about his father.

A characteristic anecdote may be told of Sir Percy, who is said to have remarked in a casual manner to a friend with whom he was driving across the Serpentine, that "that is the place where my father's first wife drowned herself." He would sometimes show his visitors at Boscombe Manor the discoloured little Sophocles that was found on Shelley's body and the eleven companion volumes bound in white vellum close by it, which offered a striking contrast.

Lady Shelley was an enthusiast where the poet or his mother was concerned, and her name figures as the editor on the title-page of *The Shelley Memorials*, although that book is said to have been the work of

## Conclusion

either the late Dr. Richard Garnett or Thomas Hookham, Shelley's old friend and correspondent, the Bond Street publisher, who in later years assisted Sir Percy Shelley in the purchase of letters by his father.

Among his friends Sir Percy counted Robert Louis Stevenson, who was living at Bournemouth shortly before he left England for the South Seas, and he dedicated *The Master of Ballantrae* to him, with the following inscription, "To Sir Percy Florence and Lady Shelley as fellow sea-farers and sea-lovers" with the author, from "the loud shores of a sub-tropical island near upon 10,000 miles from Boscombe Chine and Manor ; scenes which rise before me as I write, along with faces and voices of my friends. . . . Well, I am for the sea once more ; no doubt Sir Percy also. Let us make the signal B.R.D." The dedication is dated May 17, 1889. Sir Percy lived to read the book, but he was in failing health during that year. He passed away at Boscombe on December 5, and was buried in the grave where his mother lies, at St. Peter's, Bournemouth, on December 10, 1889, having just completed his seventieth year.



## APPENDIX I

### SHELLEY'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SLATTERS OF OXFORD (see p. 144)

*John Slatter to Sir Timothy Shelley*

OXFORD,  
*January 9, 1823.*

SIR,—In consequence of your son's death I again applied to Mr. Longdill to settle my account against your son but can obtain no answer, so I have inclosed his acknowledgement of the money but likewise his reference to Mr. Longdill when resident at Marlom to you, the repayment of which I have your honour as the circumstance of your son's being introduced into my family is best known to yourself, and remain yours,

JOHN SLATTER,  
Plumber and Glazier,  
High Street.

[In Sir Timothy's writing on the letter is the following:]

“Tolerably impudent.

“Sir T. S. lodged with Mr. Slatter's Family the whole time he was at Oxford and when he went there occasionally, and Sir T. S. did desire Mr. Slatter to advise his son against any irregularities he might see particularly not to get into debt, for which there was no occasion as he had an ample allowance.”

# Shelley in England

*Mr. Whitton to J. Slatter*

3 KING'S ROAD,  
January 15, 1823.

SIR,—Sir Tim Shelley has sent me your letter and the papers enclosed therein and if you will send a person for them the same shall be delivered. If Sir Tim Shelley did make his son known to you it was not with the wish that you should lend him money as Sir Tim well knew what was proper for his son to spend and that he allowed.

The officious interference of you and of others did a most serious injury to the Gent that is now no more—it led him into expenses and a Society and conduct the very reverse of what Sir Tim wished.

It may therefore be unnecessary for me to say that you must take your own conduct to recover what you say you advanced to Mr. Shelley, as Sir Tim declines making any payment to you on account of it and any further application to him or to me on the subject will be considered an intrusion.—Yr. Hble. Servt.,

WM. WHITTON.

[Envelope addressed]

MR. JOHN SLATTER,

Plumber and Glazier,

Oxford.

*Henry Slatter to Sir Timothy Shelley*

6 MONTAGUE PLACE, WORTHING,  
August 13, 1831.

SIR,—It is with feelings of great diffidence that I venture to approach you knowing that the subject matter must be painful to a Father's feelings, but having suffered very

## Appendix I

much in consequence of a honest endeavour to save your son from flying to Jews for the purpose of obtaining money at an enormous rate of interest, I therefore lay the case before you.

Your Son while at College became acquainted with a person of the name of Brown but who was living at Oxford under the assumed name of Bird. Of him he agreed to purchase a work of his writing for £600. Mr. Shelley applied to us to procure the money for him and he would repay us when he became of age, or he should have to go to London and borrow money of the money-lenders on post-obit bonds: this we dissuaded him from and endeavoured to raise the money for him as he agreed we should be the Printers and Publishers of his work. £200 of this sum was paid out of our pockets in cash and the remainder we became joint security with him to a person of the name of Hedges for £400 and were arrested for the amount at the suit of Hedges by Mr. Graham, Solicitor of Abingdon, with Law expenses and Principal and interest on the whole sum. We have lost upwards of £1300.

The whole is justly our due, but we only ask the Bond and interest thereon having suffered both in body and mind so much in consequence of it. I remain at Worthing three weeks longer my family being here for the benefit of their health after which I shall be in Oxford, but a letter addressed at the latter place would not at all times find me.

I shall be most ready to wait on you to give you any further information or to show you the bond which is now in my possession.—I have the honor to be, Sir, your very obedient Servt.,

HENRY SLATTER.

SIR TIMOTHY SHELLEY, Baronet,  
etc., etc., etc.

# Shelley in England

## *Enclosures*

Bond to John Hedges, dated 25 March 1811, of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Esq. . . . .	400	0	0
Interest on ditto at 5 per cent. per annum to 25 June 1831 . . . . .	405	0	0
	<u>805</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

The above sums have been paid for and on Acct. of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Esq., by Joseph Munday and Henry Slatter, late Co-Partners at Oxford, Printers and Booksellers, in consequence of proceedings against them by Wm. Graham, Esq., Solicitor, Abingdon, at the suit of Hedges.

The following is a later statement of the account sent after the death of Sir Timothy Shelley in 1844:—

*March 25, 1811.*

To Money advanced to Mr. Bird for his MS. work on Sweden, viz., £200 in Notes of Hand and £400 raised by joint Bond of John Hedges, and paid by the late Joseph Munday and his surviving Part- ner, Henry Slatter, on account of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Esq., viz. . . . .	£600	0	0
1844 Sept. 29. Interest 33 and $\frac{1}{2}$ years thereon . . . . .	1005	0	0
	<u>1605</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

[*Endorsed*] P. B. Shelley, Esq. (dec<sup>d</sup>)

Mr. Henry Slatter, Bookseller, Oxford.

## APPENDIX II

### SHELLEY'S ARREST FOR DEBT AT CARNARVON IN 1812

(see p. 396)

In Roberts' first letter written to Sir Timothy Shelley after the death of P. B. S. he refers to a loan to the poet of £6 only. In the second letter to Peacock, after Sir Timothy Shelley's death, he asks for £30. Whether this sum represents compound interest on £6 for twenty years or not, it is impossible to say. The Owen Williams mentioned in the third letter was a brother of Shelley's correspondent John Williams, to whom he wrote from Tanyrallt on April 14, 1814, "We are in immediate want of money, could you borrow £25 in my name to paying little debts? I know your brother could lend me that sum. I think you could ask him on such an occasion as this."

#### *William Roberts to Sir Timothy Shelley*

CARNARVON, NORTH WALES,

*February 7, 1824.*

SIR,—I took the liberty of writing to you a few years ago respecting Six pounds which your son was indebted to me. I assure you it is a very hard case with me to be without the money; really it would be an object to me now, if you would be kind enough to enclose them. As your son is dead I have no other person to apply to but yourself; you will, I trust, consider the justice of the claim and favor

# Shelley in England

me with an answer when convenient.—I am, Sir, your obedient servt.,

WILLIAM ROBERTS, *Surgeon*.

*William Roberts to T. L. Peacock*

UXBRIDGE PLACE, CARNARVON, N.W.

*June 12, 1844.*

SIR,—Having lately seen an account of the death of Sir Timothy Shelley, may I be allowed to hope you will pardon the liberty of my troubling you on the following subject.

About 30 years ago since, his son Mr. P. B. Shelley was arrested in this town for a sum of money which he owed, and he would have been put in Gaol if I had not bailed him for the amount. Thus our acquaintance commenced, and soon after he sent for me to attend his family at Tremadoc, 20 miles from this place. I also lent him some money which he never paid, so he left the country £30 in my debt. When I called upon you at the India House last Sept. you encouraged me with the hope that I should have this £30 in the event of your surviving Sir Timothy. The whole therefore I beg respectfully to submit to your sense of justice. If I can be of any use to you in this country I hope you will not hesitate to command my service.

My kindest regards to Mrs. Peacock. The favour of an answer would greatly oblige, Sir, your very humble servt.,

WILLIAM ROBERTS.

*N.B.*—It may be proper to observe that Mr. Shelley paid the money for which he was arrested.

I suppose the Executors of Owen Williams, the Anglesea farmer, have applied to you.

## Appendix II

*Hugh Owen to T. L. Peacock*

POOR LAW COMMISSION OFFICE,  
SOMERSET HOUSE,  
*December 12, 1844.*

DEAR SIR,—According to the kind permission which you gave me this morning I now beg to lay before you the claim of my old friend and neighbour Mrs. Williams, the Widow of the late Owen Williams of Gelliniog Wen, Parish of Llangeinwen, Anglesey.

Many years ago, I believe upwards of 30 (I find I have no memorandum of the date), Owen Williams, then residing at Tydden Newborough, Anglesey, advanced on the application of Mr. Williams of Tyhurit ir Bwlch Tremmadock, to Mr. Percy Shelley the sum of £100, as security for which Mr. Shelley gave to him (Owen Williams) a Bond stipulating for the payment of £200 on the death of Mr. Shelley's father and grandfather.

No part of this money, which was the hard earnings of a very small farmer, has ever been repaid: neither has any interest ever been received.

The payment of the money now would be of essential service to the poor Widow, and I venture to solicit your kind interference on her behalf with those who have the management of the Shelley Family.

I have the honour to be, Dear Sir, your faithful servt.,

HUGH OWEN.

THOS. LOVE PEACOCK, Esq.,  
etc., etc., etc.

## APPENDIX III

### SHELLEY'S COACHMAKER'S ACCOUNT, 1813

(see page 408)

*John Dumbreck to Sir Timothy Shelley*

EDINBURGH, July 4, 1823.

SIR,—I use the freedom of prefixing state of Account due to me by your late son, John B. Shelley, Esq., contracted while in Edinburgh in 1813.

I have frequently applied for payment to Mr. Shelley's Agents in London (Messrs. Londill & Butterfield) who delayed paying on the ground of Mr. Shelley's being abroad and their having no instructions to that effect.

Mr. William Dumbrick of the Hotel St. Andrews Sqr. here is bound to me for the debt, who when in London some time ago called on Messrs. Londill & Butterfield with the Account, who agreed to pay it, but his stay in Town being exceedingly limited he had not time to call on these Gentlemen again.

Mr. Dumbrick agreed to see my Account paid in consequence of my declining to part with Mr. Shelley's carriage after repairing it, but being sensible that this will be a serious loss to Mr. Dumbrick I have judged it proper to state the case to you trusting you will see the impropriety of my insisting on payment from Mr. Dumbrick, he having no further interest in the matter than a wish to oblige a customer (as Mr. Shelley was).

I therefore hope you will order payment to be made to prevent my taking legal measures to force payment from

## Appendix III

Mr. Dumbrick which I shall be reluctantly compelled to, in the event of your declining to settle my just claim.—  
I remain with much respect, Sir, your most obt. Servant,

JOHN DUMBRECK.

Please address to me, Coachmaker, Edinburgh.

SIR TIMOTHY SHELLEY, Bart.

J. B. SHELLEY, Esq., 1813.      To JOHN DUMBRECK.

Nov. 1.	For unhangings the chariot body, taking off the eight springs, taking them asunder, putting in 8 new main Plates, 4 new steel, pulling the springs together again and fixing them on . . . . .	£5	8	0
„	1 new double-screwed Hasp for screw- ing the other 3 Hasps, 13 new bolts, 2 new blocks, hanging the body, painting and picking out the 8 springs . . . . .	2	4	0
„	New leather for the front, lined with shalloon and screwed to the top of the dicky . . . . .	0	8	0
„	Taking off the side curtains, making them waterproof, putting in 2 strong frames with glass doors, and fixing on the curtains . . . .	0	16	0
„	Cleaning the body and carriage, and greasing the wheels . . . . .	0	3	0
„	2 new lamps, and putting them on .	3	3	0
„	A new floor-cloth cover for hind boot . . . . .	0	7	6
„	Wax candles for the lamps . . . .	0	5	0
„	Slance for carriage . . . . .	1	4	0
		<hr/>		
		£13	18	6
Interest due on this account		6	1	6
		<hr/>		
		£20	0	0

# Shelley in England

*T. Charters to T. L. Peacock*

6 NEW CHAPEL PLACE,  
KENTISH TOWN,  
*August 31, 1844.*

SIR,—Being a creditor of the late Percy Bysshe Shelley, Esq., for Coachmaker's work done for him up to Novr. 1815 to the amount of £532, 11s. 6d. for which I hold his Bill of Exchange drawn at Four years after date with Judgment entered up to secure payment and not having hitherto received any benefit from it in consequence of the unfortunate decease of the said P. B. Shelley, Esq., and the non-execution of his will, I respectfully beg to solicit your attention to my claim, and in your capacity as Executor to that Will, crave your kind endeavours to obtain for me some arrangement from the family now in possession of the property by which you will be rendering me a most essential service and which will at all times be gratefully acknowledged, and acknowledged by, Sir, your very obedient humble servant,

THOS. CHARTERS.

TO THOS. LOVE PEACOCK.

[Addressed]

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK, Esq.,  
18 Stamford Street,  
Blackfriars.

## APPENDIX IV

### SHELLEY'S RE-MARRIAGE IN LONDON, 1814

(see page 442)

BOND OF P. B. SHELLEY AND JOHN WESTBROOK,  
*dated 22 March, 1814*

Stamp £1. KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that We PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY of the Parish of Saint George Hanover Square in the County of Middlesex Gentleman and JOHN WESTBROOK of the same Parish Gentleman are holden and firmly bound to the most Reverend Father in God, CHARLES by Divine Providence, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England and Metropolitan in the Sum of Two Hundred Pounds of good and lawful Money of Great Britain to be paid to the said most Reverend Father or his certain Attorney, Successor, or Assigns; To which Payment well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, and each of us by himself, for the whole, our executors and administrators firmly by these Presents, Sealed with our Seals Dated the twenty second day of March in the Year of our Lord One Thousand eight hundred and fourteen.

The Condition of this Obligation is such, That if hereafter there shall not appear any lawful Let or Impediment by Reason of any Precontract entered into before the twenty fifth day of March, which was in the Year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and fifty four,<sup>1</sup> Con-

<sup>1</sup> By Statute 26 G. 2, c. 33, intituled "An Act for the better preventing of Clandestine Marriages," it was enacted that all marriages solemnized by License after the 25th Mar. 1754, where either of the parties should be under 21, which should be had without the consent of the parent of such parties under age first obtained, should be null and void.

## Shelley in England

sanguinity, affinity or any other cause whatsoever ; but that the above bounden Percy Bysshe Shelley and Harriet Shelley Minor heretofore Westbrook having been already married may lawfully solemnise Marriage together and in the same afterwards lawfully remain and continue for Man and Wife, according to the Laws in that behalf provided : And moreover, if there be not at this present time any Action Suit, Complaint, Quarrel or Demand moved or depending before any Judge Ecclesiastical or Temporal for or concerning any such lawful Impediment between the said Parties Nor that either of them be of any other Place or of better Estate or Degree than to the judge at granting of this Licence is suggested and by him Sworn to by and with the consent of the above bounden John Westbrook the natural and lawful Father of the said Minor.

And if the same Marriage shall be openly solemnised in the Church or Chapel in the Licence specified, between the hours appointed in the Constitutions ecclesiastically confirmed and according to the Form of the Book of Common Prayer now by law established ; and lastly, if the said parties do save harmless and indemnify the above mentioned Most Reverend Father in God, his Vicar General, and his Surrogates and all other his Officers whatsoever, by reason of the Premises ; then this Obligation to be void or else to remain in full Force and Virtue.

Signed sealed and delivered (having been first duly stamped) in the presence of

C. H. SIMS.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

JOHN WESTBROOK

SealSeal

## APPENDIX V

### SHELLEY'S ELOPEMENT WITH MARY GODWIN, 1814

(see page 443)

Since the greater part of this book was printed my attention has been drawn to a letter written by William Godwin to John Taylor of Gildengate, Norwich, under the date of November 8, 1814, in regard to Shelley's elopement with his daughter Mary in the preceding summer. Jane Clairmont, afterwards known as Claire, accompanied the fugitives. It is curious to note that Godwin mentions that Shelley and his companions stayed three weeks in Switzerland, whereas it is generally understood that they remained only forty-eight hours at the château near Lucerne on the borders of the Lake of the Four Cantons. The owner of the letter, Miss Westcott, has very kindly permitted me to print the following extract:—

“When I last wrote to you, I understood that these unhappy girls, with their pretended protector, had fixed their abode in Switzerland, with fifty pounds in their pockets. How great was our surprise then on the 16th of September to receive a letter informing us that they were already in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, London! They had taken, it seems, an old, ruinous château in Switzerland; but finding that the climate was cold, and the situation not solitary, but surrounded with inquisitive neighbours, at the end of three weeks, they turned round, and travelled with the utmost expedition for England.

## Shelley in England

This has been a cruel aggravation of our distress. Distance, like time, tends to mitigate the anguish of human feelings ; but with them thus as it were at our doors, and the chance of hearing of them every hour, we cannot for a moment lose sight of the fatal event."

Godwin then goes on to state that his wife was very anxious to recover her daughter Jane [Claire] who was acting from "a childish love of new things." She had been spoken to by Godwin and by some sage friend and had seen Fanny to no purpose. The Godwins thought of taking the girl by force, but refrained from such a course. All they seem to have done was to propose that Jane should become a governess, but not liking that they proposed that they would find a family where she should be received on the footing of a visitor merely. Jane replied that no consideration should part her from "her present friends," but she offered to comply on two conditions, viz., "that she should in all situations openly proclaim and earnestly support, a total contempt for the laws and institutions of society, and that no restraint should be imposed upon her correspondence and intercourse with those from whom she was separated." The Godwins declined to comply with these conditions.

## APPENDIX VI

### ABSTRACT OF DEED POLL WHEREBY P. B. SHELLEY DIS- CLAIMED ALL INTEREST UNDER THE WILL OF HIS GRANDFATHER SIR BYSSHE SHELLEY (see page 454)

1 March 1815. By a DEED POLL of this date under the hand and seal of the said PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY AFTER RECITING (among other things) the Will of his grandfather Sir Bysshe Shelley (dated 1805) and a Codicil thereto dated the 29th October 1811 AND AFTER RECITING that the said Percy Bysshe Shelley not considering the benefits conditionally conferred on him by the said Will as a sufficient inducement for him to relinquish his Estate tail expectant on the death of the survivor of Sir Bysshe Shelley and his father Timothy Shelley of and in the Manors and other hereditaments comprised in the Indentures of Settlement dated 20 August 1791 and 30 September 1782 had determined not to comply with the conditions contained in the said Codicil but to renounce and disclaim all right under the said Will IT WAS WITNESSED that the said PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY did thereby for himself and his heirs irrevocably renounce and disclaim unto all persons whatsoever interested in the premises all such estate benefit and advantage whatsoever into from or out of the heredit and premises devised and bequeathed by the said Will of the sd. Sir Bysshe Shelley or any Codicil thereto and from or out of the moiety of the residuary personal Estate of the said Sir Bysshe.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> By the execution of this deed Percy Bysshe deprived his issue male of the very considerable benefits which they otherwise would have taken under Sir Bysshe's will and which benefits in consequence passed to his brother John and his issue male. Sir Bysshe's residuary personal estate alone amounted to £143,675, 12s. 5d., as appears from the Chancery proceedings.

## APPENDIX VII

ABSTRACT OF APPOINTMENT BY SIR TIMOTHY SHELLEY  
AND P. B. SHELLEY OF THE ESTATES DEVISED BY THE  
WILL, DATED 1782, OF JOHN SHELLEY OF FIELD PLACE

13 May 1815. By INDENTURE of this date made between PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY of Marchmont Street Brunswick Square of the first part SIR TIMOTHY SHELLEY of the second part and ROBERT PARKER (the brother-in-law of Timothy) of the third part AFTER RECITING the Will of the said John Shelley and a Fine levied by Percy Bysshe with the concurrence of Timothy AND AFTER RECITING that Percy Bysshe lately proposed to Timothy that if Timothy would give him an adequate consideration for his concurrence in exercising a certain joint power of appointment in such manner as would vest in Timothy the fee in the Estates devised by the Will of John Shelley he the said Percy Bysshe would concur in all acts necessary for that purpose AND AFTER RECITING that on a discussion of the said proposals of the said Percy Bysshe it was agreed between him and his father that the consideration should consist partly of the payment of a sum of money and partly of an Annuity to be paid by the said Timothy AND AFTER RECITING that Timothy and Percy Bysshe afterwards fixed the said Annuity at £1000 AND AFTER RECITING that both the said Timothy and Percy Bysshe had consulted with their friends and professional advisers on various statements made between them as to the value of the said Estate devised by the said Will and of their interest therein and

## Appendix VII

that they the said Timothy and Percy Bysshe having taken the same into their consideration they had agreed with each other that the sum of £7400 should be paid IT WAS WITNESSED that in consideration of £7400 paid by Timothy to Percy Bysshe and of the payment of an annuity of £1000 to be paid by Timothy to Percy Bysshe during the joint lives of Timothy and Percy Bysshe THEY Timothy and Percy Bysshe (in exercise of the joint power of appointment reserved to them) did appoint the Estates devised by the said Will of John Shelley to SUCH USES as Timothy should by any deed or by his Will appoint.

## APPENDIX VIII

### ABSTRACT OF DEED WHEREBY SIR TIMOTHY SHELLEY COVENANTED TO PAY AN ANNUITY OF £1000 PER ANNUM TO P. B. SHELLEY DURING THEIR JOINT LIVES

13 May 1815. BY INDENTURE of this date made between SIR TIMOTHY SHELLEY of the first part PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY of the second part and the said ROBERT PARKER of the third part AFTER RECITING (among other things) that the said Percy Bysshe Shelley having a wife and two children unprovided for and having contracted debts to a considerable amount had made a certain proposal to the said Sir Timothy Shelley and that the said Sir Timothy Shelley had taken such proposal into consideration and as well for the purpose of enabling the said Percy Bysshe Shelley to make a suitable provision for his said wife and children as for delivering him from his embarrassments the said Sir Timothy Shelley had agreed to comply with such proposal and to advance the said Percy Bysshe Shelley a certain sum of money for payment of his debts and to secure to the said Percy Bysshe Shelley payment of an annual sum of one thousand pounds during the joint lives of the said Sir Timothy Shelley and Percy Bysshe Shelley IT WAS WITNESSED that the said SIR TIMOTHY COVENANTED to pay to the said PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY during their joint lives THE ANNUAL SUM OF ONE THOUSAND POUNDS payable in quarterly instalments on the 25th day of March the 24th day of June the 29th day of September and the 25th day of December in every year and charged certain lands of Sir Timothy Shelley with the payment of the said Annuity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is no copy of this deed among the Shelley-Whitton papers. The above abstract has been made from Longdill's affidavit in the Shelley v. Westbrook litigation.

## APPENDIX IX

### THE INQUEST ON HARRIET SHELLEY'S BODY

(see page 476)

[*Endorsement*

#### WARRANT ON THE BODY OF HARRIET SMITH

*December 11, 1816*

*St. Margaret*

*List of the Jury:* John Smith, Daniel Lounds, Richard Jones, Henry Taylor, Wm. Rumbell, Thomas Bailey, Abm. Sarvis, George Cope, Saml. House, Richd. Tirds, Robt. Smith, Thomas Holland.]

City and  
Liberty of  
Westminster  
in the County  
of Middlesex

} to wit.

To the CONSTABLES OF THE PARISH OF SAINT  
MARGARET WESTMINSTER within the said  
Liberty of Westminster.

The Execution  
of this Warrant  
appears by the  
Schedule here-  
to annexed

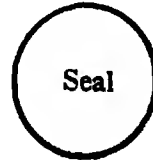
James Gray  
Constable

By virtue of my Office these are in his Majesty's  
Name to charge and command you that on Sight  
hereof you summon & warn Twenty-four able and  
sufficient Men of the said Liberty, personally to be  
and appear before me on Wednesday the Eleventh  
Day of December by Twelve of the Clock at noon  
of the same Day at the house of Thomas Phillips  
known by the sign of the Fox Knightsbridge then and there  
to do and execute all such Things as shall be given them in  
Charge, on the Behalf of our Sovereign Lord the King's  
Majesty touching the death of Harriet Smith and for  
your so doing this is your Warrant. And that you also  
attend at the Time and Place above-mentioned, to make  
a Return of the names of those you shall so summon And

# Shelley in England

further to do and execute such other Matters as shall be then & there enjoined you, and have you then and there this Warrant Given under my Hand and Seal this Tenth Day of December in the year of our Lord 1816.

(Signed) JNO. HY. GELL  
Coroner



## [Endorsement

INFORMATION OF WITNESSES ON VIEW OF THE  
BODY OF HARRIET SMITH

*December 11, 1816*

*St. Margt. Westr.*

Verdict: Found dead in the Serpentine River.]

City and  
Liberty of  
Westminster  
in the County  
of Middlesex  
to wit.

INFORMATION OF WITNESSES taken this eleventh day of December One thousand eight hundred and sixteen at the House of Thomas Phillips known by the sign of the Fox situate in Knightsbridge in the Parish of Saint Margaret Westminster, on view of the Body of Harriet [*sic*] Smith then and there lying dead as follows to wit—

JOHN LEVESLEY of No. 38 Dennings Alley Bishopsgate Street Without an Out Pensr. belonging to Chelsea Hospital being sworn saith as follows:

About 10 o'clock yesterday Morning the 10th day of December instant I was walking by the side of the Serpentine on my way to Kensington and observed something floating on the River which conceiving to be a human Body I called to a boy on the opposite side to bring his Boat which after some time he did to the side of the bank of the River on which I stood. I got into the boat & found that it was the Body of the deceased quite dead, there appeared no sign of life and I have no doubt that the Body must have lain in the Water some days.

(Signed) JOHN LEAVSLEY [*sic*]

## Appendix IX

WILLIAM ALDER a Lodger at the Fox Public House aforesaid, Plumber, being sworn saith as follows :

I knew the deceased she resided at No. 7 Elizabeth Street Hans Place she was a married Woman but did not live with her husband—she had been missing as I was informed from her House upwards of a Month, and at the request of her Parents when she had been absent about a week I dragged the Serpentine River and all the ponds near thereto without effect the deceased having for some-time labored under lowness of Spirits which I had observed for several months before and I conceived that something lay heavy on her Mind. On hearing yesterday that a Body was found I went and recognized it to be the deceased—she was about 21 years of age and was married about 5 years.

(Signed) WM. ALDER.

JANE THOMAS of 7 Elizabeth Street Hans Place, Widow, being sworn saith as follows :

The deceased occupied the second floor in my House she took them accompanied by a Mr. Alder, she stated that she was a married lady & that her Husband was abroad she took them from month to month—she had been with me about 9 weeks on the 9th of November last, she paid her month's Rent on the Thursday preceding—she appeared in the family way and was during the time she lived in my House in a very desponding and gloomy way—on the 9th of November last she left my House as I was informed by my servant Mary Jones I did not see the deceased that day.

(Signed) JANE THOMAS.

MARY JONES, Servant to the last Witness, being sworn saith as follows :

On Saturday the ninth of November last the deceased breakfasted and dined in her Apartments, she told me

## Shelley in England

previously that she wished to dine early & she dined about 4 o'clock—she said very little, she chiefly spent her time in Bed. I saw nothing but what was proper in her Conduct with the exception of a continual lowness of Spirits—she left her Apartment after Dinner which did not occupy her more than 10 minutes—I observed she was gone out on my going into her room about 5 o'clock that day. I never saw or heard from her afterwards.

The x mark of  
MARY JONES.

### [Endorsement

INQUISITION ON VIEW OF THE BODY OF HARRIET SMITH

*December 11, 1816*

*St. Margt., Westr.*

Verdict : Found dead in the Serpentine River.]

City and  
Liberty of  
Westminster  
in the County  
of Middlesex

} to wit.

AN Inquisition Indented taken for our Sovereign  
Lord the King at the House of Thomas Phillips  
known by the Sign of the Fox in Knightsbridge  
in the Parish of Saint Margaret Westminster

within the Liberty of the Dean and Chapter of the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, Westminster, in the County of Middlesex, the Eleventh day of December in the Fifty-seventh Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, before John Henry Gell Esq. Coroner of our said Lord the King for the said City and Liberty, on view of the body of Harriet [*sic*] then and there lying dead, upon the oath of the several Jurors whose names are hereunder written, and Seals affixed, good and lawful Men of the said Liberty, duly chosen, who being then and there duly sworn and charged to enquire for our said Lord the King, when, how, and by what Means the said Harriet [*sic*] Smith came to her Death, do upon their Oath say, that the said Harriet Smith on the tenth day of December in the year aforesaid at the Parish aforesaid

## Appendix IX

in the City Liberty and County aforesaid was found dead in the Serpentine River, to wit near Kensington in the Parish City Liberty and County aforesaid, that the said Harriet Smith had no marks of violence appearing on her body, but how or by what means she became dead, no evidence thereof does appear to the Jurors.

In witness whereof, as well the said Coroner as the Jurors have to this Inquisition set their Hands and Seals the Day, Year and Place first above written.

	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>	Coroner	
The x mark of JOHN SMITH, Foreman	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>	GEO. COPE	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>
The x mark of HENRY TAYLOR	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>	ROBT. SMITH	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>
ABM. SARVIS	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>	RICHARD JONES	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>
RICHARD TIRDS	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>	THOS. BAILEY	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>
DANIEL LOWNDS (	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>	SAML. HOUSE	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>
WM. RUMBLE	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>	THOMAS HOLLAND	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <b>G.R.</b> </div>

## APPENDIX X

### SHELLEY'S MARRIAGE TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN IN 1816 (see page 488)

ALLEGATION OF P. B. SHELLEY AND WM. GODWIN

*Dated 28 Decr. 1816*

*Vicar General's Office 28 December 1816*

Which day appeared personally PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY and made Oath, that he is of the Parish of Saint Mildred Bread Street London a Widower and intendeth to intermarry with MARY WALLSTONECRAFT [*sic*] GODWIN of the City of Bath Spinster a minor of the age of nineteen years & upwards but under the age of twenty one years by & with the consent of William Godwin the natural & lawful Father of the said minor and that he knoweth of no lawful impediment, by reason of any Precontract, Consanguinity, Affinity or other lawful cause whatsoever, to hinder the said intended Marriage, and prayed a Licence to solemnize the same in the Parish Church of Saint Mildred Bread Street aforesaid and further made Oath, that the usual place of abode of the appearer hath been in the said Parish of Saint Mildred Bread Street for the space of four weeks last past.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Then appeared personally the said WILLIAM GODWIN and made Oath that he is the natural & lawful Father of the said minor & freely consents to the above intended marriage.

W. GODWIN

Sworn before me, S. PARSON. Sur—

## Appendix X

BOND OF P. B. SHELLEY AND W. GODWIN

*Dated 28 Decr. 1816*

Stamp £1. KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that We PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY of the Parish of Saint Mildred Bread Street London Gentleman & WILLIAM GODWIN of the City of Bath Gentleman are holden and firmly bound to the most Reverend Father in God, CHARLES, by Divine Providence, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England, and Metropolitan, in the sum of Two Hundred Pounds of good and lawful Money of Great Britain to be paid to the said most Reverend Father, or his certain Attorney, Successor, or Assigns: To which Payment well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, and each of us by himself, for the whole, our executors and administrators firmly by these Presents Sealed with our Seals Dated the twenty eighth day of December in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Eight hundred and sixteen.

The condition of this Obligation is such, That if hereafter there shall not appear any lawful Let or Impediment by Reason of any Precontract entered into before the twenty fifth day of March, which was in the Year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and fifty four, Consanguinity, Affinity or any other Cause whatsoever; but that the above bounden Percy Bysshe Shelley a Widower & Mary Wallstonecraft [*sic*] Godwin Spinster a Minor may lawfully solemnize Marriage together and in the same afterwards lawfully remain and continue for Man and Wife, according to the Laws in that behalf provided; And moreover, if there be not at this present Time any Action, Suit, Complaint, Quarrel, or Demand, moved or depending before any Judge, Ecclesiastical or Temporal for or concerning any such lawful Impediment between the said Parties Nor that either of them be of any other Place, or of better Estate or Degree than to the Judge at granting

## Shelley in England

of this Licence is suggested and by him sworn by & with the consent of the said William Godwin the natural & lawful Father of the said Minor.

And if the same Marriage shall be openly solemnized in the Church or Chapel in the License specified, between the Hours appointed in the Constitutions ecclesiastically confirmed, and according to the Form of the Book of Common Prayer, now by Law established ; and, lastly, if the said parties do save harmless and indemnify the above mentioned Most Reverend Father in God, his Vicar General, and his Surrogates, and all other his Officers whatsoever, by Reason of the Premises ; then this Obligation to be void or else to remain in full Force and Virtue.

Signed sealed and delivered (having been first duly stamped) in the presence of

JNO. MATTHEWS.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

W. GODWIN

A circular seal with the word "Seal" in the center.

Seal

A circular seal with the word "Seal" in the center.

Seal

## APPENDIX XI

### MARRIAGE OF IANTHE ELIZA SHELLEY TO EDWARD JEFFRIES ESDAILE (see page 515)

*J. Gregson to Sir Timothy Shelley*

*July 29, 1837.*

DEAR SIR TIMOTHY,—Mr. Esdaile is the eldest son of the eldest son of old Mr. Esdaile of the late firm of Esdaile & Co. the bankers of Lombard St. Mr. Esdaile, the father of the intended, had a considerable property on his mother's side. His father the banker also, I believe, settled a large sum upon him. He was never in business and consequently escaped the recent misfortune. He has lived as a country gentleman in Somersetshire, and is, I believe, a very estimable person, and his son will make a very respectable match for the young lady upon whom report says that Mr. Beauchamp intends to bestow a fortune. I have it stated that Mr. Edward Esdaile has £4000 per annum, but my own impression is that this is an exaggeration.—We were certainly beaten by bribery at Leominster. I did not know that Mr. Greenaway was a connection of Mr. Hurst. He cannot retain his seat if the affair be followed up.—Yrs., etc.,

J. GREGSON.

SIR T. SHELLEY, Bart.

# Shelley in England

*Mrs. Parker to Sir Timothy Shelley*

6 CIRCUS, BATH,  
December 13, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Ianthe<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Esdaile lunched with me. She seemed very well and very happy—he behaved perfectly like a gentleman and very attentive to his wife. They were going to Bristol that evening to visit her Aunt before she returned to her own home. She promised to write to me, but I have never heard a word of or from her since, and Mr. Esdaile said he would remind her to write as soon as she got home. Spoke much of the pleasure they had in their visit at Field Place, but Mr. Beauchamp was going to London upon business and wished to see them before he went and she said we must not disappoint him. . . .—Your affectionate sister,

H. PARKER.

<sup>1</sup> In September 1837 Eliza Ianthe Shelley (Shelley's eldest child by his first wife Harriet), then of Watford House, Somerset, was married to Edward Jeffries Esdaile, the younger son of E. J. Esdaile the elder, of Cothelbestone House, Somerset.

On her marriage she settled the legacy of £6000 bequeathed to her by the will of her father.

# **SHELLEY'S MS. NOTE-BOOK**



## SHELLEY'S MS. NOTE-BOOK <sup>1</sup>

TRELAWNY states that when he left Leghorn on August 13, 1822, and went on board Byron's boat the *Bolivar* to superintend the burning of the bodies of Shelley and Williams, he "had previously engaged two large feluccas, with drags and tackling, to go before, and endeavour to find the place where Shelley's boat had foundered." Having ascertained the spot where the *Ariel* had last been seen afloat, they succeeded in finding her, but failed to get her up. Trelawny wrote to Captain Roberts, who was at Genoa, and asked him to "complete the business." Roberts was successful in bringing the boat to the surface, and he anchored her off Via Reggio. On September 18, he wrote to Trelawny to say that by Byron's advice he had sold the *Ariel* by auction, and she realised a trifle more than two hundred dollars, and he had divided the proceeds with the crew of the felucca who had been employed in getting her up. Out of the hull, he said, "we fished clothes, books, spyglass, and other articles. We found in the boat two memorandum-books of Shelley's quite perfect, and another damaged, a journal of Williams' quite perfect, written up to the 4th July. I washed the printed books; some of them were so glued together by the slimy mud that the leaves could not be separated; most of these are now in Ld. B.'s custody. The letters, private papers, and Williams' journal, I left in charge of Hunt, as I saw there were many severe remarks on Ld. B." <sup>2</sup>

The note-book, now under examination, may be the one referred to by Captain Roberts as damaged. It has passed successively through the hands of Mary Shelley, Sir Percy Shelley, and Jane, Lady Shelley, to its present owner, Sir John C. E. Shelley. Photographs have been made of every page of the book, and from these pages I have endeavoured to give a faithful transcription. The difficulties of this task will be realised by an examination of the facsimiles. It is obviously a note-book

<sup>1</sup> The copyright of the contents of this book is reserved by Sir John C. E. Shelley.

<sup>2</sup> Trelawny's *Recollections*.

# Shelley's MS. Note-Book

in which Shelley used to jot down the rough ideas of his poems. I have attempted to arrange the pages in something approaching order. From the contents it would seem to have been used by Shelley during the year 1821.

The passages and words within square brackets in the transcripts, show Shelley's cancellations.

## A DEFENCE OF POETRY

[This essay was to have consisted of three parts, the first of which only was written by Shelley early in the year 1821. It was designed as a reply to an article entitled "The Four Ages of Poetry," contributed by Thomas Love Peacock to the first number of *Ollier's Literary Miscellany*. This periodical, for which *A Defence of Poetry* was intended as a contribution, was discontinued, and a manuscript of Shelley's article came into the hands of John Hunt, with a view to its insertion in *The Liberal*. Hunt went over the manuscript and deleted any references to Peacock's article, but before it could be printed *The Liberal* ceased publication at the fourth number. It was not until 1841 that Mrs. Shelley, having regained possession of the MS., printed the *Defence*, for the first time, in Shelley's *Essays and Letters from Abroad*. The passages deleted by Hunt were not restored by Mrs. Shelley, and they remained unprinted until M. A. H. Koszul re-edited the essay from two of Shelley's MSS. now in the Bodleian, for his little volume of *Shelley's Prose in the Bodleian Library*. One is a draft which shows, like the following pages of *Adonais*, the author's careful method of composition. The other is apparently the fair copy that was sent to Ollier on March 21, 1821. The copy of the portion of the essay in Shelley's note-book occupies twenty-five pages, each page being distinguished in the present transcript by roman figures, I to XXIV, and a rider numbered XIa. The manuscript is beautifully and clearly written, and the pages which it occupies are fortunately among those that have escaped damage. One leaf, between pages XII and XIII, is missing, but the text, to preserve continuity, has been supplied in italics. One of the notes deleted by Hunt occurs in the manuscript on pages XIX and XX, and many variations are noted in the footnotes.]

Hence the fame of sculptors, painters, and musicians, although the intrinsic powers of the great masters of these arts may yield in no degree to that of those who have em-

## A Defence of Poetry

ployed language as the hieroglyphic of their thoughts, has never equalled that of poets in the restricted sense of the term; as two [I<sup>1</sup>] performers of equal skill, will produce unequal effects from a guitar and a harp. The fame of legislators and founders of religions, so long as their institutions last,<sup>2</sup> alone seems to exceed that of poets<sup>3</sup> in the restricted sense; but it can scarcely be a question,<sup>4</sup> whether, if we deduct the celebrity which their flattery of the gross opinions of the vulgar usually conciliates, together with that which belonged to them in their higher character of poets, any excess<sup>5</sup> will remain.

We have thus circumscribed the meaning of the<sup>6</sup> word Poetry within the limits of that art which is the most familiar and the most perfect expression of the faculty itself. It is necessary, however, to make the circle still narrower, and to determine the distinction between measured and unmeasured language; for the popular division into prose and verse is inadmissible [II] in accurate philosophy. Sounds as well as thoughts have relation both<sup>7</sup> between each other and towards that which they represent, and a perception of the order of those relations has always been found connected with a perception of the order of the relations of<sup>8</sup> thoughts. Hence the language of poets has ever affected a certain uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, without which it were not poetry, and which is scarcely less indispensable to the communication of its actions,<sup>9</sup> than the words themselves, without reference to that peculiar order. Hence the vanity of translation;<sup>10</sup> it were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from [III] its seed, or it will bear no flower—and this is the burthen of the curse of Babel.

An observation of the regular mode of the recurrence of this<sup>11</sup> harmony in the language of poetical minds, together with its relation to music, produced metre, or a certain system of traditional forms of harmony and language. Yet it is by

<sup>1</sup> The first page of the MS. begins here.

<sup>2</sup> *remain* has been deleted.

<sup>3</sup> *that* inserted and deleted.

<sup>4</sup> *the meaning of the* inserted.

<sup>5</sup> *that* deleted.

<sup>10</sup> Shelley wrote here and cancelled *for it is not translation to create anew*.

<sup>11</sup> *this* inserted.

<sup>3</sup> *who* inserted and deleted.

<sup>5</sup> *would* deleted.

<sup>7</sup> *among* inserted and deleted.

<sup>9</sup> *effects* cancelled and *actions* inserted.

## Shelley's MS. Note-Book

no means essential that a poet should accommodate his language to this traditional form, so that the harmony, which is ~~its~~ spirit, be observed. The practice is indeed convenient and popular, and to be preferred, especially in such composition as includes much form and <sup>1</sup> action: but every great poet must inevitably innovate upon the example of his predecessors in the exact structure of his peculiar versification. The distinction between poets and prose writers is a vulgar error. The distinction between [IV] philosophers and poets has been anticipated. Plato was essentially a poet—the truth and splendour of his imagery, and the melody of his language,<sup>2</sup> is the most intense that it is possible to conceive<sup>3</sup>: he rejected the measure of the epic, dramatic, and lyrical forms, because he sought to kindle a harmony in thoughts divested of shape and action, and he forebore to invent any regular plan of rhythm which should<sup>4</sup> include, under determinate forms, the varied pauses of his style. Cicero sought to imitate the cadence of his periods, but with little success. Lord Bacon was<sup>5</sup> a poet.\* His language has a sweet and majestic rhythm, which satisfies the sense,<sup>6</sup> no less than the almost superhuman wisdom of his philosophy satisfies the intellect; it is a strain which<sup>7</sup> distends, and then bursts [V] the circumference of the hearer's<sup>8</sup> mind, and pours itself forth together with it into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy. All the<sup>9</sup> authors of revolutions in opinion are not only necessarily poets as they are inventors, nor even as their words unveil the<sup>10</sup> permanent analogy of things by images which participate in the life of truth; but as their periods are harmonious and rhythmical, and contain in themselves the elements of verse; being the echo of the eternal music. Nor are those supreme poets, who have employed traditional forms of rhythm on account of the form and action of their subjects, less capable of perceiving and teaching the truth of things, than those who have omitted that form. Shakespeare, Dante, and Milton (to confine ourselves to modern writers) are philo-[VI]-sophers of the very loftiest power.

\* See the *Filum Labyrinthi*, and the *Essay on Death* particularly [Shelley's note].

<sup>1</sup> *form and* inserted.

<sup>2</sup> *is* in MS.

<sup>3</sup> *conceive* in MS. The sentence runs on in the MS.

<sup>4</sup> *should* in MS.

<sup>5</sup> Shelley began to write *essen[tially]*, but cancelled the word.

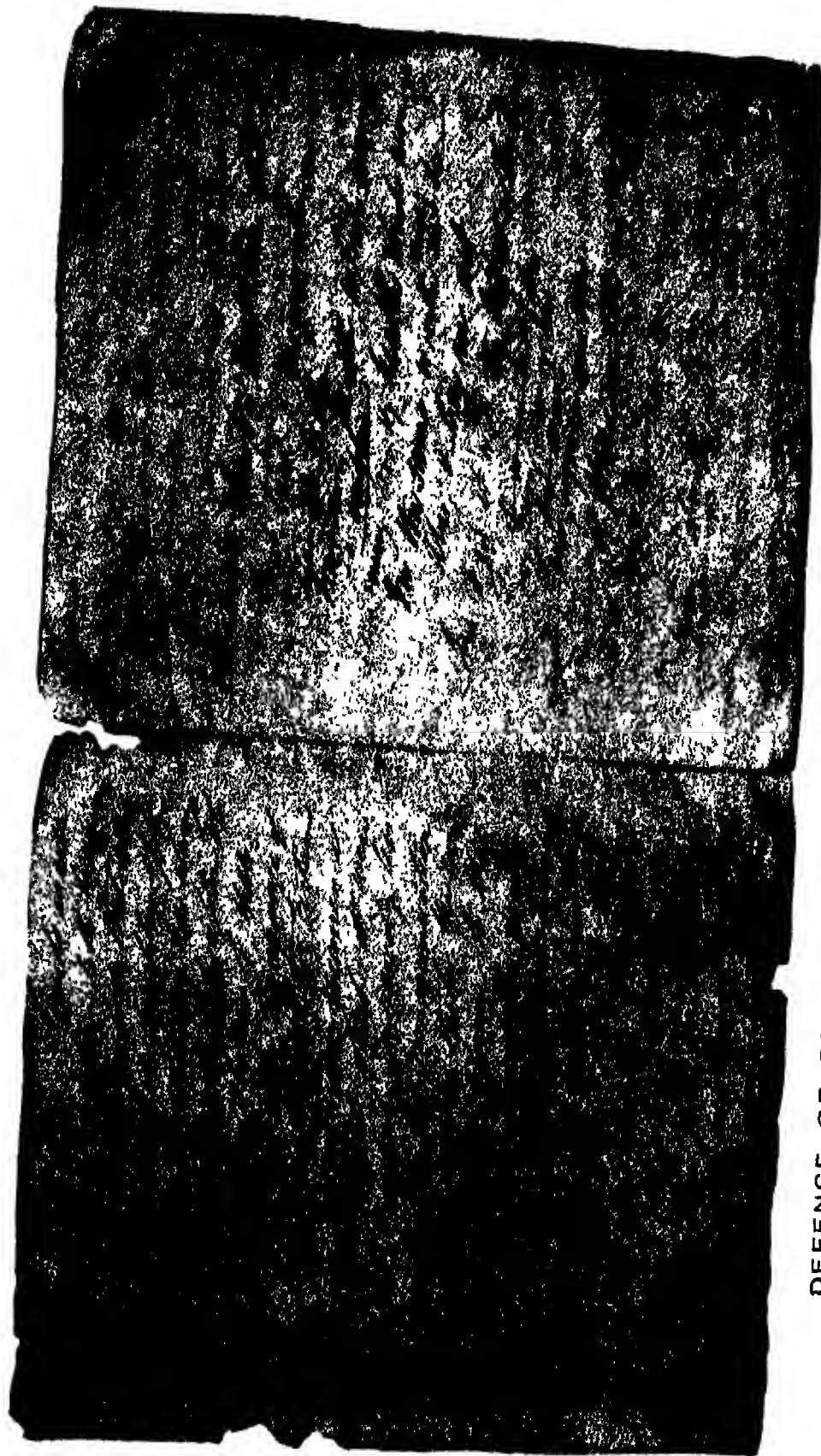
<sup>6</sup> *and therefore* cancelled.

<sup>7</sup> *fills and* cancelled.

<sup>8</sup> *hearer's* in MS.

<sup>9</sup> *great* inserted and cancelled.

<sup>10</sup> *real* cancelled and *permanent* inserted.



DEFENCE OF POETRY.

TO EMILIA VIVIANI.



# A Defence of Poetry

A poem is the <sup>1</sup> image of life expressed in its eternal truth. There is this difference between a story and a poem, that a story is a catalogue of detached facts, which have no other connection than time, place, circumstance, cause and effect; the other is the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the Creator, which is itself the image of all other minds. The one is partial, and applies only to a definite <sup>2</sup> period of time, and a certain combination of events which can never again recur; the other is universal, and contains within itself the germ of a relation to whatever <sup>3</sup> motives or actions <sup>4</sup> have place in the possible varieties of human nature. Time, which destroys <sup>5</sup> the beauty and the use of the story [VII] of particular facts, stripped of the poetry which should invest them, augments that of poetry, and for ever develops new and wonderful applications of the eternal truth which it contains. Hence epitomes have been called the moths of just history; they eat out the poetry of it. The <sup>6</sup> story of particular facts is as a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful: Poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted.

The parts of a composition may be poetical, without the composition as a whole being a poem. A single sentence may be considered as a whole, though it <sup>7</sup> be found in <sup>8</sup> a series of unassimilated portions; a single word even may be a spark of inextinguishable thought. And thus all the great historians, Herodotus, Plutarch, Livy, were poets; and although the plan of their works, <sup>9</sup> especially that [VIII] of Livy, restrained them from developing this faculty in its highest degree, they make <sup>10</sup> copious and ample amends for their subjection, by filling all the interstices of their subjects with living images.

Having determined what is poetry, and who are poets, let us proceed to estimate its effects upon society.

Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure: all spirits on which it falls open themselves to receive the wisdom which is mingled with its delight. In the infancy of the world, neither poets themselves nor their auditors are fully aware

<sup>1</sup> *very* not in MS.

<sup>2</sup> *thoughts* inserted and cancelled.

<sup>3</sup> *the value* cancelled

<sup>7</sup> *may not* in MS.

<sup>9</sup> *their works* in MS.

<sup>3</sup> *condition* inserted and cancelled.

<sup>4</sup> *which* cancelled.

<sup>6</sup> *The* in MS.

<sup>8</sup> *the midst of* not in MS.

<sup>10</sup> *make* in MS.

## Shelley's MS. Note-Book

of the excellency<sup>1</sup> of poetry : for it acts in a divine and unapprehended manner, beyond and above consciousness ; and it is reserved for future generations to contemplate and measure the mighty cause and effect in all the strength and splendour of their union. Even in modern times, no living [IX] poet ever arrived at the fulness of his fame ; the jury which sits in judgment on<sup>2</sup> a poet, belonging as he does to all time, must be composed of his peers :<sup>3</sup> it must be impanneled by Time<sup>4</sup> from the selectest of the wise of many generations. A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds ; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of<sup>5</sup> an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why. The poems of Homer and his contemporaries were the delight of infant Greece ; they were the elements of that social system which<sup>6</sup> is the column upon which all succeeding civilisation has reposed. Homer embodied the ideal perfection of his age in human character ; nor can we doubt that those [X] who read his verses were awakened to an ambition of becoming like to Achilles, Hector, and Ulysses : the truth and beauty of friendship, patriotism, and persevering devotion to an object, were unveiled to the depths in these immortal creations : the sentiments of the auditors must have been refined and enlarged by a sympathy with such great and lovely impersonations,<sup>7</sup> until from admiring they imitated, and from imitation they identified themselves with the objects of their admiration. Nor let it be objected, that these characters are remote from moral perfection, and that they can by no means be considered as edifying patterns for general imitation. Every epoch, under names more or less specious, has deified its peculiar<sup>8</sup> errors ; Revenge is the naked idol of the worship of a semi-barbarous age ; and Self-deceit is the veiled Image of unknown evil, [XI] before which<sup>9</sup> luxury and satiety lie prostrate. But a poet considers the vices of his contemporaries as the<sup>10</sup> temporary dress [in]<sup>11</sup> which his creations<sup>12</sup> must be arrayed, and which cover without concealing the eternal proportions of their beauty. An<sup>13</sup> epic or

<sup>1</sup> *excellency* in MS.

<sup>2</sup> *and they* inserted and cancelled.

<sup>3</sup> *an invisible* cancelled.

<sup>4</sup> *was one of the* inserted and cancelled.

<sup>5</sup> A word inserted here and cancelled.

<sup>6</sup> *the* cancelled.

<sup>7</sup> *in* inserted and cancelled.

<sup>8</sup> *poetical* cancelled.

<sup>9</sup> *on* in MS.

<sup>10</sup> *out* cancelled.

<sup>11</sup> *vices* inserted and cancelled.

<sup>12</sup> *peculiar* cancelled.

<sup>13</sup> *are to* cancelled.

## A Defence of Poetry

dramatic personage is understood to wear them around his soul, as he may the ancient armour or the modern uniform around his body; whilst it is easy to conceive a dress more graceful than either. The beauty of the internal nature cannot be so far concealed by its accidental vesture, but that the spirit of its form shall communicate itself to the very disguise, and indicate the shape it hides from the manner in which it is worn. A majestic form and graceful motions will express themselves <sup>1</sup> through the most barbarous and tasteless costume. [XIA] Few poets of the highest class have chosen to <sup>2</sup> exhibit the beauty of their conceptions in its naked truth and splendour; and it is doubtful whether the alloy of costume, habit, etc., be not necessary to temper this planetary music for mortal ears.

The whole objection, however, <sup>3</sup> of the immorality of poetry rests upon a [XII] misconception of the manner in which poetry acts to produce the moral improvement of man. Ethical science arranges the elements which poetry has created, and propounds schemes and proposes examples of civil and domestic life: nor is it for want of admirable doctrines that men hate, and despise, and censure, and deceive, and subjugate one another. But poetry acts in another and diviner manner. It awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought. Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar; it reproduces all that it represents, and the impersonations clothed in its Elysian light stand thenceforward in the minds of those who have once contemplated them, <sup>4</sup> *as memorials of that gentle and exalted content which extends itself over all thoughts and actions with which it coexists. The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it*

<sup>1</sup> *upon* cancelled.

<sup>2</sup> *paint* cancelled.

<sup>3</sup> *which* inserted and cancelled.

<sup>4</sup> A page is missing from the MS. here; the text, in italics, is supplied from Mrs. Shelley's version.

## Shelley's MS. Note-Book

*with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void for ever craves fresh food.* [XIII] Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb. A poet therefore would do ill to embody his own conceptions of <sup>1</sup> right and wrong, which are usually those of his place and time, in his poetical creations, which participate in neither. By this assumption of the inferior office of interpreting the effect, in which perhaps after all he might acquit himself but imperfectly, he would resign the <sup>2</sup> glory of <sup>3</sup> a participation in the cause. There was little danger that Homer, or any of the eternal Poets, should have so far misunderstood themselves as to have abdicated this throne of their widest dominion. Those in whom the poetical faculty, though great, is less intense, as Euripides, Lucan, Tasso, Spenser, have frequently affected a moral aim, and the effect of their [XIV] poetry is diminished but <sup>4</sup> in exact proportion to the degree in which they compel us to advert to this purpose.

Homer and the cyclic <sup>5</sup> poets were followed at a certain interval by the dramatic and lyrical Poets of Athens, who flourished contemporaneously with all that is most perfect in the kindred expressions of the poetical faculty; architecture, painting, music, the dance, sculpture, philosophy, and we may add, the forms of civil life. For although the scheme of Athenian society was deformed by many imperfections which the poetry existing in chivalry and Christianity have <sup>6</sup> erased from the habits and institutions of modern Europe; yet never at any other period has so much energy, beauty, and virtue been developed; never was blind strength and stubborn form so disciplined and rendered subject to the will of man, or that will [XV] less repugnant to the dictates of the beautiful and the true, as during the century which preceded the death of Socrates. Of no other epoch in the history of our species have we records and fragments stamped so visibly with the image of the divinity in man. But it is Poetry alone, in form, in action, or in language, which has rendered this epoch memorable above all others, and the store-house of examples to everlasting time. For, written poetry

<sup>1</sup> *moral* deleted.

<sup>2</sup> *of* in MS.

<sup>3</sup> *and religion* deleted.

*the* in MS.

*but* in MS.

*have* in MS.

## A Defence of Poetry

existed at that epoch simultaneously with the other arts, and it is an idle enquiry<sup>1</sup> to demand which gave and which received the light, which all as from a common focus, have scattered over the darkest periods of succeeding age.<sup>2</sup> We know no more of cause and effect than a constant conjunction of<sup>3</sup> events. Poetry is ever found to coexist with whatever other arts contribute to the happiness and perfection of man. I appeal to what has [XVI] already been established to distinguish between the cause and the effect.

It was at the period here adverted to, that the Drama had its birth; and however a succeeding writer may have equalled or surpassed those few great specimens of the Athenian drama which have been preserved to us, it is indisputable that the art itself never was understood or practised according to the true philosophy of it, as at Athens. For the Athenians employed language, action, music, painting, the dance, and religious institutions, to produce a common effect in the representation of the highest idealisms of passion and of power; each division of<sup>4</sup> the art was made perfect in its kind by artists of the most consummate skill, and was disciplined into a beautiful proportion and unity<sup>5</sup> one towards the other. [XVII] On the modern stage a few only of the elements capable of expressing the image of the poet's conception are employed at once. We have tragedy without music and dancing; and music and dancing without the high<sup>6</sup> impersonations of which they are the fit accompaniment, and both without religion and solemnity;<sup>7</sup> religious institution has indeed been usually<sup>8</sup> banished from the stage. Our system of divesting the actor's face of a mask, on which the many expressions appropriated to<sup>9</sup> his dramatic character might<sup>10</sup> be moulded into one permanent and unchanging expression, is favourable only to a partial and inharmonious effect; it is fit for nothing but a monologue, where all the attention may be directed to some great master of ideal mimicry. The modern practice of blending comedy with tragedy, though [XVIII] liable to great abuse in point of practise,<sup>11</sup> is undoubtedly an extension of the Dramatic circle; but the comedy should be as in King Lear, universal, ideal, and sublime. It is

<sup>1</sup> enquiry in MS.

<sup>2</sup> certain cancelled.

<sup>3</sup> among each other inserted and cancelled.

<sup>4</sup> The sentence runs on in the MS.

<sup>5</sup> completely inserted and cancelled.

<sup>10</sup> should is deleted.

<sup>2</sup> age in MS.

<sup>4</sup> of in MS.

<sup>6</sup> high in MS.

<sup>9</sup> the deleted.

<sup>11</sup> practise in MS.

## Shelley's MS. Note-Book

perhaps the intervention of this principle which determines the balance in favour of King Lear against the *Cædipus Tyrannus* or the Agamemnon, or, if you will, the trilogies with which they are connected; unless the <sup>1</sup> intense power of the choral poetry, especially that of the latter, should be considered as restoring the equilibrium. King Lear, if it can sustain this comparison, may be judged to be the most perfect specimen of the dramatic art existing in the world; in spite of the narrow conditions to which the poet was subjected by the ignorance of the philosophy of the drama <sup>2</sup> which has prevailed in modern Europe. Cal-[XIX]-deron, in his religious Autos, has <sup>3</sup> attempted to fulfil some of the high conditions of dramatic representation neglected by Shakespeare; such as the establishing a relation between the drama and religion, and the accommodating them to music and dancing; but he omits the observation of conditions still more important, and more is lost than gained by the substitution of the rigidly defined and ever-repeated idealisms of a distorted superstition for the living impersonations of the truth of human passion.

But we <sup>4</sup> digress.—<sup>5</sup> The Author of the 4 Ages of Poetry has prudently omitted to dispute on the effect of the Drama upon life and manners. For, if I know the Knight by the device of his shield, I have only to inscribe Philoctetes or Agamemnon or Othello upon mine to put to flight the giant sophisms [XX] which have enchanted them, as the mirror of intolerable light though on the arm of one of the weakest of the Paladins could blind and scatter whole armies of necromancers and pagans. The <sup>6</sup> connection of scenic exhibitions <sup>7</sup> with the improvement or corruption of the manners of men, has been universally recognised; in other words, <sup>8</sup> the presence or absence of poetry in its most perfect and universal form has been found to be connected with good and evil in conduct or habit. The corruption which has been imputed to the drama as an effect, begins, when the poetry employed in its constitution, ends: I appeal to the history of manners whether the gradations <sup>9</sup> of the growth of the one and the decline of the other have not corresponded with an exactness equal to any other <sup>10</sup> [XXI] example of moral cause and effect.

<sup>1</sup> *superior* cancelled.

<sup>2</sup> *art* cancelled.

<sup>3</sup> *fulfilled in* cancelled.

<sup>4</sup> *we* in MS.

<sup>5</sup> This paragraph, down to the word *pagans*, which had special reference to Peacock's essay on the "Four Ages of Poetry," was omitted by Mrs. Shelley when she first printed Shelley's *Defence*.

<sup>6</sup> *the effect of the* inserted and cancelled.

<sup>7</sup> *in* deleted.

<sup>8</sup> *that* deleted.

<sup>9</sup> *gradations* in MS.

<sup>10</sup> *other* in MS.

## A Defence of Poetry

The drama at Athens, or wheresoever else it may have approached to its perfection, ever coexisted with the moral and intellectual greatness of the age. The tragedies of the Athenian poets are as mirrors in which the spectator beholds himself, under a thin disguise of circumstance, stript of all but that ideal perfection and energy which every one feels to be the internal type of all that he Loves, admires, and would become. The imagination is enlarged by a sympathy with pains and passions so mighty, that they distend in their conception the capacity of that by which they are conceived ; the good affections are strengthened by pity, indignation, terror and sorrow ; and an exalted calm is prolonged from the satiety of this high exercise of them into [XXII] the tumult of familiar life : even crime is <sup>1</sup> disarmed of half its horror and all its contagion by being represented as the fatal consequence of the unfathomable agencies of nature ; error is thus divested of its wilfulness ; <sup>2</sup> men can no longer cherish it as the creation of their choice : in a drama of the highest order there is little food for censure or hatred ; it teaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect. Neither the eye nor the mind can see itself, unless reflected upon that which it resembles. The drama, so long as it continues to express poetry, is as a prismatic and many-sided mirror, which collects the brightest rays of human nature and <sup>3</sup> divides and reproduces them from the simplicity of these elementary forms, and touches them with majesty and beauty, and multiplies all that it reflects, and endows it with the power of [XXIII] propagating its like wherever it may fall.

But in periods of the decay of the <sup>4</sup> social life, the drama sympathises with that decay. Tragedy becomes a cold imitation of the form of the great masterpieces of antiquity, divested of all harmonious accompaniment of the kindred arts ; and often the very form misunderstood, or a weak attempt to teach certain doctrines, which the writer considers as moral truths ; and which are usually no more than specious flatteries of some gross vice or weakness, with which the author, in common with his auditors, are infected. Hence what has been called the classical and domestic drama. Addison's Cato is a specimen of the one ; and would it were not superfluous to cite examples of the other ! To such purposes poetry cannot be made subservient. Poetry [XXIV]

<sup>1</sup> *divested* deleted.

<sup>2</sup> The sentence runs on.

<sup>3</sup> *and divides them* deleted ; *and divides* written again. <sup>4</sup> *the* in MS.

## Shelley's MS. Note-Book

is a sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, which consumes the scabbard that would contain it. And thus we observe that all dramatic writings of this nature are unimaginative in a singular degree; they affect sentiment and passion, which, divested of imagination, are other names for caprice and appetite. The period<sup>1</sup> in our own history of the grossest degradation of the drama is the reign of Charles II., when all forms in which poetry had been accustomed to be expressed became hymns to the triumph of kingly power over liberty and virtue. Milton stood alone illuminating an age unworthy of him.

### "ADONAIS"

[Shelley employed himself, at Pisa, during the months of May and June 1821, in writing *Adonais*. In a letter to his friends the Gisbornes, written early in June, he says: "I have been engaged these last days in composing a poem on the death of Keats, which will shortly be finished; and I anticipate the pleasure of reading it to you, as some of the very few persons who will be interested in it and understand it. It is a highly-wrought *piece of art*, and perhaps better in point of composition, than anything I have written." That he ranked the poem highly we may gather, as he also told Miss Clairmont, in a letter of June 8, that it was better than anything that he had written, and "worthy both of him [Keats] and of me." On the same date he informed Ollier, his publisher, that he had finished the poem, and that it consisted of about forty Spenser stanzas, which were to be preceded by a criticism on *Hyperion*. Shelley did not fulfil his intention of writing this criticism or of publishing the poem in London, but sent the MS. on June 16 to press at Pisa, where it was printed handsomely "with the types of Didot." On July 13 he presented a copy, the only one that had been delivered, to John and Maria Gisborne.

The notes for the preface that follow occupy fourteen pages of the note-book, and in the transcript I have numbered them with Roman figures. A few passages were printed in *The Relics of Shelley*, 1862, by Dr. Richard Garnett, who adopted his own arrangement. None of the cancelled fragments of

<sup>1</sup> of cancelled.

## Preface to “Adonais”

*Adonais* printed in the same volume by Dr. Garnett were derived from the present manuscript. The following early draft of the poem, which is now printed for the first time, is not only interesting as showing the steps by which Shelley built up his elegy, but as revealing here and there passages worthy of preservation. One page, marked XVII in the fascimile, and a few lines on other pages of the MS. I have failed to decipher. Most of the pages bearing these notes for the poem are in a very imperfect and damaged condition. The text of each stanza as printed by Shelley is given in italics.]

### SHELLEY'S PREFACE TO “ADONAI”

[I] No personal offence should have drawn from me this public comment upon such stuff as . . .

Keats came to Italy . . . I knew personally but little of Keats having met him two or three [? times] at my friend Hunt's, but on the news of his situation I wrote to him suggesting the propriety of trying the Italian climate and inviting him to join me. His answer to my letter was . . . Unfortunately he did not allow me . . .

Since however this notice has been [II] wrested from me [? by] indignation and [sympathy] my pity I will allow myself a first and last word on the subject of calumny as it relates to me [and now all further public discussions must be closed]. As an author I have dared and invited censure; [my opinions] if I understand myself I have written neither for profit nor fame. I have [sought to erect a sympathy between my species and myself] employed my poetical compositions and publications simply as the instruments of that sympathy between myself and others which the ardent and unbounded love I [felt] cherished for my kind incited me to acquire. I expected all sorts of stupidity and insolent contempt from these . . .

[III] These compositions (excepting the tragedy of the *Cenci* which was written in a hurry rather to try my powers than to unburden my full heart) are [wretchedly inadequate] insufficiently . . .

[IV] . . . commendation than perhaps they deserve; even from their bitterest enemies; but they have not attained any corresponding popularity. As a man, I shrink from notice and regard; the ceaseless ebb and flow of the world vexes me; My habits are simple I know. I desire to be left in peace. I have been the victim of a monstrous and unheard

## Shelley's MS. Note-Book

of tyranny. I am the victim of a despotic power which has violated in my home the rights of nature and has [V] stooped into the region where such as hell-[ . . . ] [animal] a slave can breathe. I think it necessary to hang out a bloody flag where the tyger [ . . . ] has made his meal of Liberty.

Reviewers, with some rare exceptions are in general a most stupid and malignant race ; as a bankrupt thief turns thief-taker in despair ; so an unsuccessful Author turns Critic and punishes others of that . . .

There are honest and honorable men among Reviewers no doubt, but these will be foremost . . .

[VI] The shaft which this Parthian shot, fell on a heart [cased in] made callous by many blows, but poor Keats's was composed of more penetrable stuff.—The *Endymion* was a poem in which a critic will find indeed much to condemn, but was there nothing to applaud ? Were there no traces of a sublime genius mingled with errors of taste and obscurity of purpose ? Could the critics who found the Revd. Mr. Somebody's *Paris* sublime because it flattered their masters, and who wrote with complacence of Mr. Gatty [VII] Knight's *Syrian Tale*—because it was published at Murray's who printed Mr. Milman's drama of *Jerusalem* a mere well-written imitation of [Kehama] Southey, and the everlasting poetry of Lord Byron that they—who talk with patience of such drivelling as *Brutus* and *Evadne*—could they find nothing to commend in the *Endymion* ? At what gnat did they strain here, after having swallowed all those camels ? Mr. Southey and Mr. Gifford well know what true poetry is ; Mr. Southey, especially, who has edited the remains of Kirke White, knows ; they could not have been mistaken with respect to the indications afforded by portions of this poem of such astonishing descriptive power which they will have observed in the *Hyperion*. Surely such [VIII] men as these hold their repute cheap in permitting to their subordinate associates so great a licence, not of praise which can do little mischief, but of censure which may destroy—and has destroyed one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. It shall be no excuse to the murderer that he has spoken daggers but used none.

The offence of this poor victim seems to have consisted solely in his intimacy with Leigh Hunt, Mr. Hazlitt and some others of the enemies of despotism and superstition. My friend Hunt has a very hard skull to crack, and would take a deal of killing. I do not know much of Mr. Hazlitt, but . . .

[IX] [Mr.] Keats was the chosen intimate of [Hunt] Leigh

the world is a vast and  
mysterious place, and  
it is our duty to  
explore it, and to  
discover the secrets  
which it holds for us.  
We must not be  
content with the  
commonplace, but we  
must seek for the  
unknown, and for the  
wonderful. We must  
be brave, and we must  
be true. We must  
be honest, and we  
must be just. We  
must be kind, and we  
must be gentle. We  
must be patient, and  
we must be firm. We  
must be brave, and we  
must be true. We  
must be honest, and  
we must be just. We  
must be kind, and we  
must be gentle. We  
must be patient, and  
we must be firm.

## DEFENCE OF POETRY.

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must be gentle. We  
must be patient, and  
we must be firm.

## PREFACE TO ADONAIS.



## Preface to "Adonais"

Hunt and Mr. Hazlitt and other enemies of despotism and superstition. The *Quarterly Review* has . . .

Mr. Gifford I believe . . . learned . . .

The Editor of this *Quarterly Review* in particular amongst [many persons] of the most splendid accomplishments and the most honourable minds certainly has in his employment the most malignant and accomplished slanderers. But I should have hated him had he ventured on any . . . insinuation that ever prostituted his soul for twenty pounds per sheet.

[X] The bigot will say it was the recompense of my errors, the man of the world will call it the result of my imprudence [but never was calumny heaped in so profuse a measure upon any head as upon mine]. Persecution, contumely and calumny have been heaped upon me in profuse measure. I have [been made the victim of a tyranny . . .] domestic conspiracy and legal oppression combined have violated in my person the most sacred rights of nature and humanity, . . . [my health . . .] and the chastening of my spirit.

[XI] The scheme of such writers is to extinguish . . .

But in the present instance the merits and the demerits, the truth and falsehood of the case were [so carefully entangled . . .] But a young mind panting after fame is the most vulnerable prey : he is armed neither with philosophy . . .

[But let it be considered that an animat[ed ?] But a young spirit panting for fame, doubtful of its own powers and certain only of its aspirations, is but ill [qualified] fitted to assign its true value to the sneers of this world.

[XII] [The *Endymion* merited . . .]

[His happiness is in the present.]

He knows not that such stuff as this is of the abortive and monstrous Births which Time consumes as fast as it produces. He sees the truth and falsehood, the merits and demerits of his case inextricably entangled.

[XIII] It may well be said that these wretched men know not what they do. These midwives of the dross and abortions which time consumes as fast as it produces : scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether they light on a heart made callous by many blows or on one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of them to my knowledge is . . .

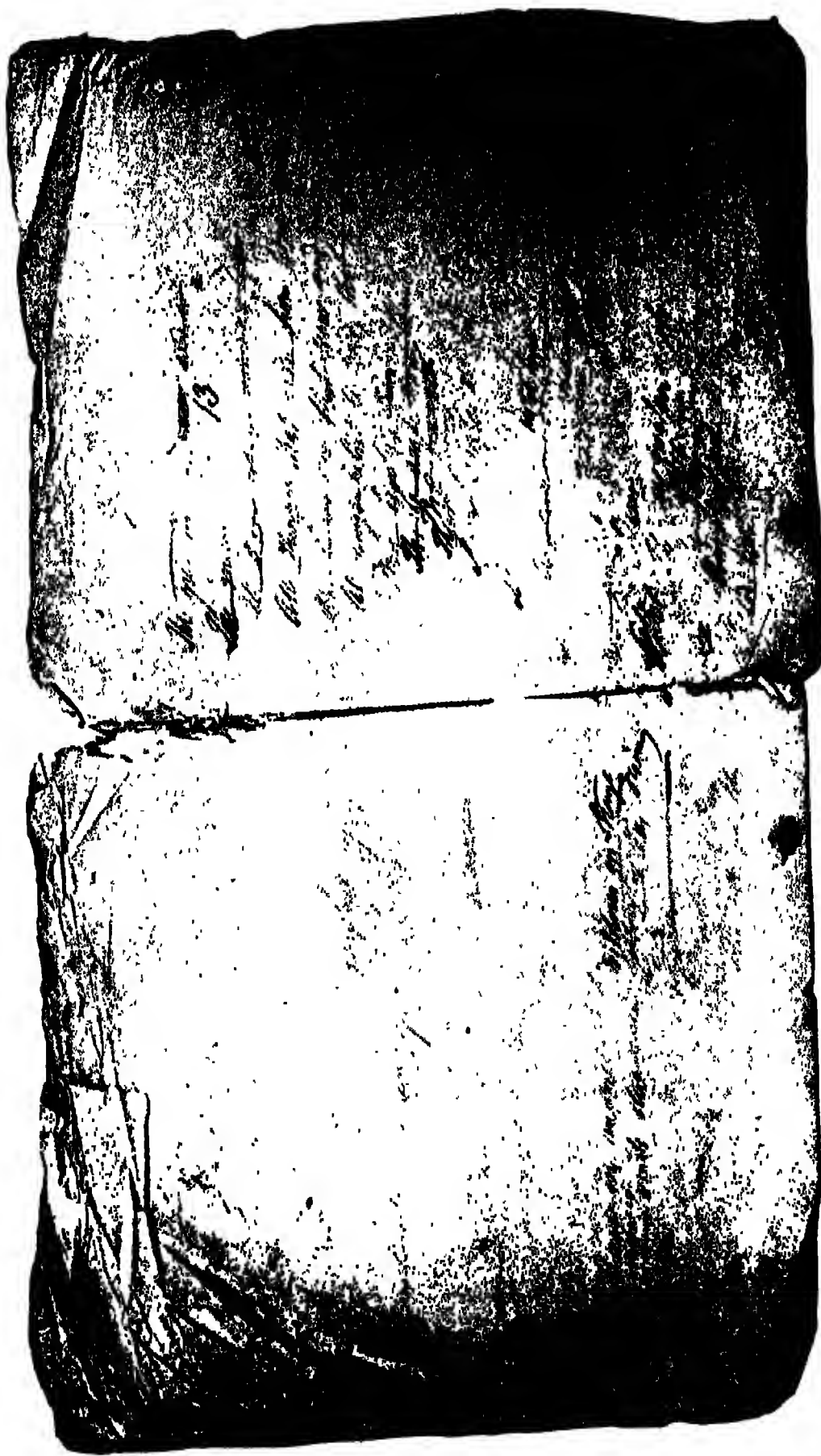
Was *Endymion* a poem whatever might be its defects to be spoken of contemptuously by those who had celebrated with various degrees of complacency and panegyric *Paris* and

## Shelley's MS. Note-Book

*Woman and a Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu and Mr. Baggett and Mr. Milman?

[XIV] What gnat did they strain at here after having swallowed all these camels? What is the woman taken in adultery against whom the foremost of these literary prostitutes has cast his venal stone? Miserable man, [thou] you who art one of the meanest have destroyed one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse that [you have] murdered as you are, you have spoken daggers but used none.





ADONNAIS.

XIV.

XIV.





ADONAI.

XXI.

V.

# ADONAIS

v

Most musical of mourners weep [again] anew  
 [Athens arose : and some whom]  
 [Many are dead, and some living now] [still]  
 [When soaring like winged]  
 [Like winged stars]  
 Not all to that pure station dared to climb  
 And happier they their happiness who knew  
 And burn like tapers through that night of time  
 In which suns perished others more sublime  
 Struck by the envious wrath of man or God  
 [Have withered in their splendour]  
 Most perished in the refulgence of their prime  
 And others live, treading the thorny road  
 Which leads through toil and hate to thy serene  
 abode.

v

*Most musical of mourners, weep anew !  
 Not all to that bright station dared to climb :  
 And happier they their happiness who knew,  
 Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time  
 In which suns perished ; others more sublime,  
 Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,  
 Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime ;  
 And some yet live, treading the thorny road,  
 Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's  
 serene abode.*

xiv<sup>a</sup> <sup>1</sup>

The grey

13

[All things that Adonais loved]  
 [All things that loved him living moan]  
 [All things that were which living]  
 All things he [that he adored and made  
 and changed]  
 From shape and hue and odour and sweet  
 sound  
 Lamented Adonais. Morning sought  
 [A cavern of grey stone] Watch-tower  
 Dimmed aerial eyes that kindled day  
 [Flash] The melancholy thunder moaned  
 And they Echo, in the mountains.

xiv<sup>b</sup> <sup>2</sup>

[The] Pale Ocean in inquiet slumber lay  
 The [sobbing] wintery winds flew round [wilder  
 in strange] sobbing in their dismay.

xiv

*All he had loved, and moulded into thought  
 From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,  
 Lamented Adonais. Morning sought  
 Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,  
 Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,  
 Dimmed the aerial eyes that kindle day ;  
 Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,  
 Pale Ocean in inquiet slumber lay,  
 And the wild winds flew around, sobbing in their  
 dismay.*

<sup>1</sup> In pencil, corrected with ink. <sup>2</sup> Note by Shelley in pencil on this page: "Mr. Severn's dying [ ] of the highest."

xv

Sits mute or seeks the voice whose  
 [Gathers . . . Droops into]  
 15  
 [She wanders, in the deserts o'er [through]  
 Lost Echo [sometimes wanders] sits among the  
 voice . . .  
     [now wanders among the]  
 And feeds her grief [silence] with his  
 And will no more reply to [ ] winds or  
 Or [ ] amorous birds perched on the  
     [swing] young  
 Or herdsman's horn or bell at closing day  
 [Nor ever she] For she can mimic not the lips  
     more dear  
 Than his, for whom her      pined away  
 [They Your      they cannot answer thee.

xv

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,  
 And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,  
 And will no more reply to winds or fountains,  
 Or amorous birds perched on the young green  
     spray,  
 Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;  
 Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear  
 Than those for whose disdain they pined away  
 Into a shadow of all sounds;—a drear  
 Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen  
     hear.

<sup>1</sup> In pencil.

xvi <sup>1</sup>

wild and she threw down  
     Autumn were  
 Or thy      her delight is flown  
     have waked the sullen year  
  
 To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear  
 Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both  
 Thou Adonais; wan they stand  
  
     xvii  
 With [sweet] drooping glad flowers      of her  
     youth      that in their [season]  
  
 Turn      departed  
 With dew all turned to tears      in their youth.

xvi

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw  
     down  
 Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,  
 Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,  
 For whom should she have waked the sullen year?  
 To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear,  
 Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both  
 Thou Adonais; wan they stand and sere  
 Amid the faint companions of their youth,  
 With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing  
     ruth.



ADONAI

XVI.

XVI.







XVII.

ADONAI'S

XV.

XVIIa

This spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale  
 Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain  
     answered, eagles when they sail

The emblem of thy  
 Moan frosts, and ye caverns old uplying  
 Lament the  
 Moan forests waves [caves] and mountains :  
     torrent streams  
 And chrystal fountains  
 And whispering fountains and resounding]  
 Spirits and ye mountains and ye caves  
 And thou Abyss, lament with me      and  
     voice

Turn into tongues all thy lamenting waves  
 High Heaven with that      harmony  
 Ye      and Winds      harmony  
     sphere answer me . . . and ye  
 Tempests and clouds and wandering shadows tell  
     the air

677

XVIIb

Emblems of the  
 Not so the eagles soaring when they  
 Not so the eagle who like thee could scale  
 Heaven and could [feed within] nourish in the  
     sun's domain  
 His mighty youth with lightning doth complain  
 Screaming and sailing round her empty nest  
 As Albion wails for thee  
 Light on his head who  
 And scared the angel soul that . . . earthly

XVII

*Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale,  
 Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain :  
 Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale  
 Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain  
 Her mighty youth, with morning doth complain,  
 Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,  
 As Albion wails for thee : the curse of Cain  
 Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,  
 And scared the angel soul that was its earthly quest !*

xviii

[Alas] What [gentle song] silver verse is what  
gentle form  
Fresh leaves and flowers deck  
[Anemones and bluebells strew]  
The birds appear  
The swallow [too returns] builds his nest

xviii

*Ah woe is me ! Winter is come and gone,  
But grief returns with the revolving year ;  
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone ;  
The ants, the bees, the swallows, re-appear ;  
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons'  
bier ;  
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,  
And build their mossy homes in field and breve ;  
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,  
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.*

678

xixb

Alas the spring is come gone ! [fled]  
[The mountains woods]  
Again the hills wears  
[The hills and meadows] adorn again]  
[The mountains bath]  
[The quickening morning [with his  
[Since [God, smile] dawned] morning through the]  
[ first morning through the]  
[God dawned the universe]  
[The streams, the meadows and the  
quickening [spirit] presence as  
Since [in] the great morning of the  
God dawned upon  
[Burns with with it, Earth]  
things that start with life]  
stars]

xix

*Through wood and stream and field and hill and  
Ocean,  
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst,  
As it has ever done, with change and motion,  
From the great morning of the world when first  
God dawned on Chaos : in its stream immersed,  
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light ;  
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst ;  
Diffuse themselves ; and spend in love's delight,  
The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.*

xviii AND xix a

The spring is come : the spirit rock  
and stream and mountain cloud and rock  
[Upon the stream the mountains and the  
meadow]  
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has  
As it has ever done,  
From the great morning of the world when first  
God dawned [upon the Universe vapour] on  
Chaos : in its [light] stream immersed  
The softer lamps of Heaven flash with  
things drink love and satiate the]  
[And lie. Of moated life and]  
[And all things dead satiate ]

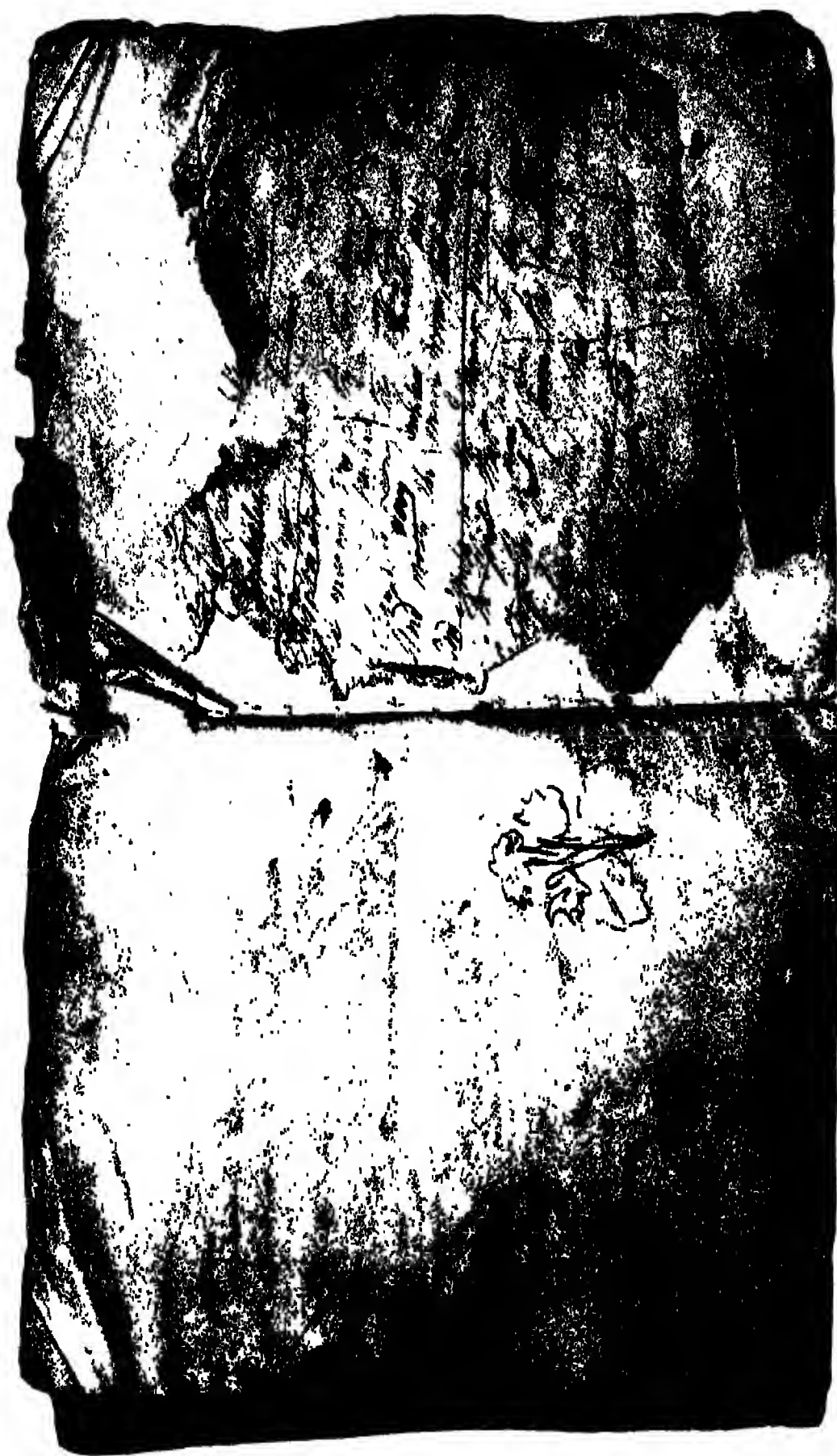


ADONAI.

XIX







ADONAI

xx

[Exhales]  
Like incarnations of the stars when splendour  
Is changed to [ ] fragrance they [ ]  
illumine death.

very sunless  
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath  
[And smile as the  
The spirit that it, the bright sword  
the spirit of man the beautiful the  
strong,  
The burning sword of this neglected sheath

xx

*The leprous corpse touched by this spirit tender,  
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath ;  
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour  
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death,  
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath ;  
Nought we know dies. Shall that alone which  
knows  
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath  
By sightless lightning ? th' intense atom glows  
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.*

xxi

Than those for whose disdain she pined away  
Shadow of all sounds :  
Withers into silence a whisper drear  
among their songs the passing hear  
Ye [forests] woods and ye eternal mountains and  
ye brooks

And the Abyss lament with me O Sea  
Turn into tongues all thy complaining waves  
[Heaven teach with thine inaudible harmony]  
This this sphere with their high harmony]  
and chords all wandering airs a plaint  
lift not your pale hearts from herb and tree  
Let the fruit [fall] die and [ ] from  
my despair O ye Spectators he is dead  
[Despair  
[Heaven O witness] who witness it  
[And] Let city call to city—Woe is me  
[Let hoar] Winter hoar

Let evening usher night, night [wake] urge the  
morrow  
Month waken month with grief, and year wake  
year to sorrow  
follow

xxi

*Alas ! that all we loved of him should be,  
But for our grief, as if it had not been,  
And grief itself be mortal ! Woe is me !  
Whence are we, and why are we ? of what scene  
The actors or spectators ? Great and mean  
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must  
borrow.  
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,  
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,  
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year  
to sorrow.*

xxiii*a*

The golden day . . . borne on golden wings  
Even as a ghost abandoning the bier  
Has left the Earth a corpse . . . the [she . . .  
mourning

22

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs  
Out of the east and follows wild and drear  
The golden Day which on eternal wings  
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier  
Has left [the] her Earth a corpse  
[Darkness around her sped]  
[Saddens around her path]  
[Gathered Darkness]  
[Darkened around . . . so struck]

xxiii*b*

She rose, [like the] as the Autumnal night  
Out of the east following swift  
Follows wild it grew  
Following the golden day whose rapid wings  
of the sun whose  
Have left the earth a corpse  
Following the [rapid] golden day, whose  
Even [like] as a ghost abandoning the bier .  
life

Leave though blind  
It tosses with the speed of wind and clouds  
Lightnings and rain shapeless morn sickens

· xxiii*c*

So saddened round her like an atmosphere  
Of misty darkness  
storm of darkness obscured  
A paling mist so swept her on her way  
Even to the  
hair was heavy with  
her silken hair hung heavy

xxiii

*She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs  
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear  
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,  
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,  
Has left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear  
So struck, so roused, so rapt, Urania,  
So saddened round her like an atmosphere  
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way,  
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.*

[illegible][illegible]





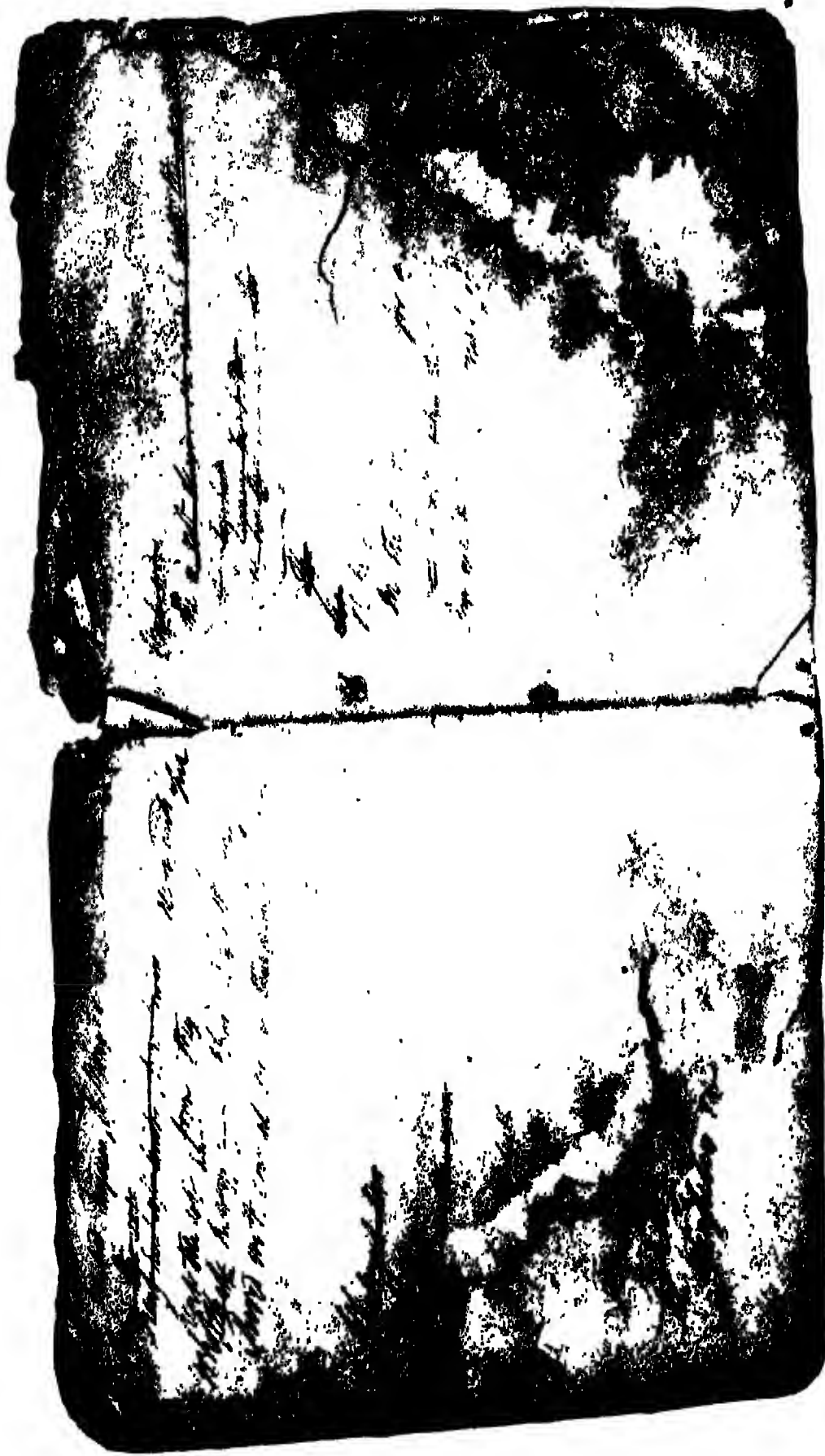


ADONAI S.

XXIV.

XXIII.





ADONAI8

XXV

XXIV.

xxiv a

Through all the nations of the rugged globe  
 Cities and armies, camp with steel and stone  
 [Through]  
 Out of the silent Paradise she sped  
 Her flashing  
 Her hair like [clouds] mists from her

23

She [rose] sped into  
 Through Darkness swept  
 She came out of her  
 Through [fields] camps and cities rough with  
 And human hearts

Yielding not, wounded  
 Palms of

xxiv b

And barbed tongues, and thoughts  
 [From the soft]  
 [Rent her soft limbs, like poison]  
 Rent her soft [ ] form they never could repel  
 Whose [ ] sacred blood like the young  
       tears in May  
 Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

xxiv

*Out of her secret Paradise she sped,  
 Through camps and cities rough with stone, and  
       steel,  
 And human hearts, which to her aery tread*

*Yielding not, wounded the invisible  
 Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell ;  
 And barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp  
       than they*

*Rent the soft Form they never could repel,  
 Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,  
 Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.*

xxv

[He is not dead . . . she said and with the word]  
 In the death chamber for a moment Death  
       Death  
 And art thou dead       cried

xxv

*In the death-chamber for a moment Death,  
 Shamed by the presence of that living Might,  
 Blushed to annihilation, and the breath  
 Revisited those lips, and life's pale light  
 Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear  
       delight.  
 " Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,  
 As silent lightning leaves the starless night !  
 Leave me not ! " cried Urania : her distress  
 Roused Death : Death rose and smiled, and met  
       her vain caress.*

xxxxa

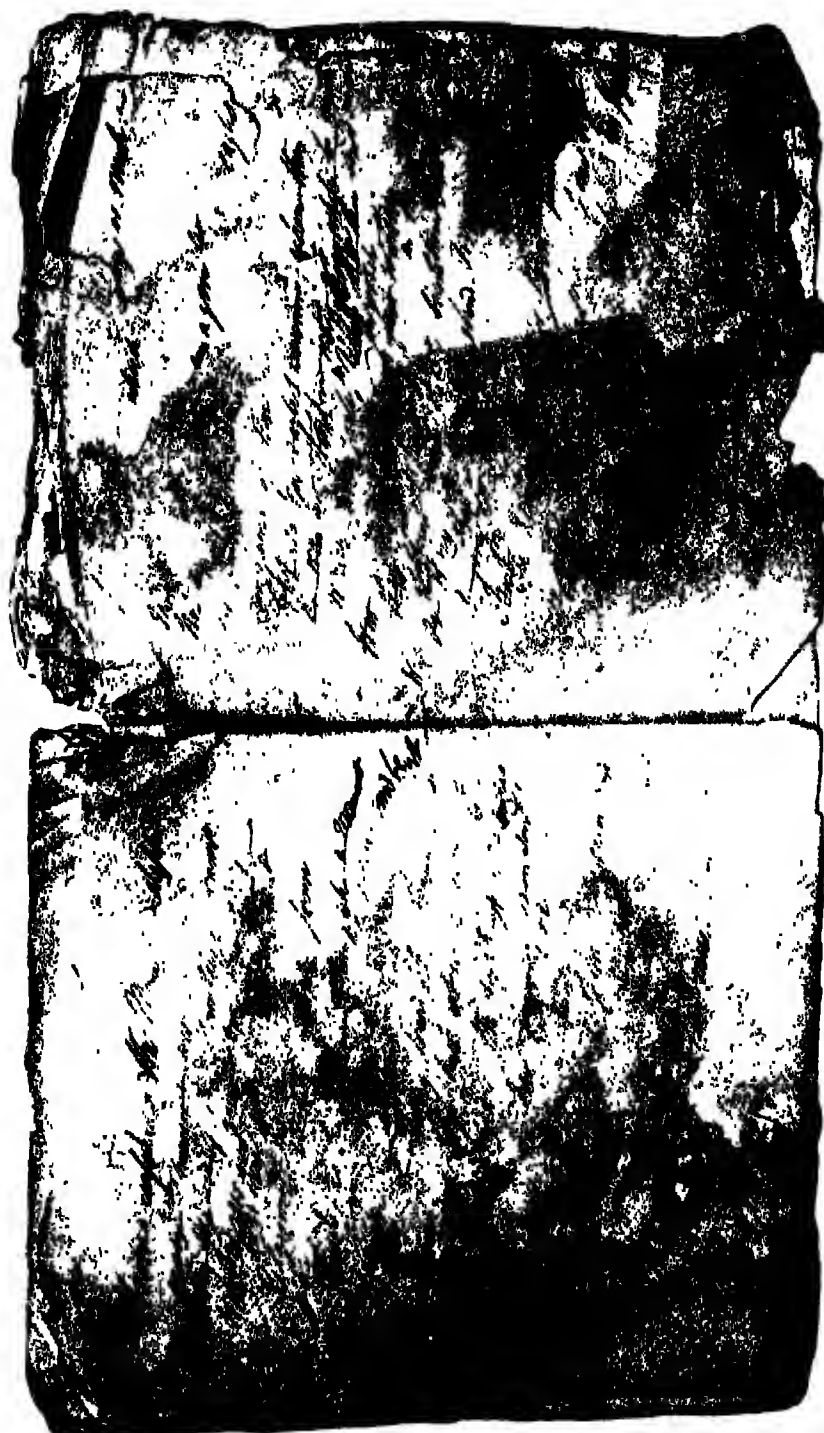
Urania ceased . . . the mountain shepherds  
    [weary music]  
The [weary] Shepherds of the mountains came  
    their garlands sere their magic  
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame  
    round them like a monument]  
        like a       bent  
        living head like Heaven is bent  
        thy best eternal monument  
        veiling all the lightning[s] of his song  
        sorrow her wilds Ierne [even] sent  
        lyrist of her saddest wrong  
        like music from his tongue

xxxxb

poisoned [fire] flame out of the trance

xxx

Thus ceased she : and the mountain shepherds  
    came,  
    Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent ;  
    The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame  
    Over his living head like Heaven is bent,  
    An early but enduring monument,  
    Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song  
    In sorrow ; from her wilds Iern : sent  
    The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,  
    And love taught grief to fall like music from his  
        tongue.



XVII.

ADONAIS.

XXX

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ADON AIS.

XXX.

XVII.

XL*a*

He is at . . . he wakes, he is . . .  
 [He has escaped out . . . pit of worms]  
 His spirit soon its silken cradle  
 And left that

the naked world  
 [He dreams no more . . . ]

From

His spirit soon its silken

From envy

His spirit soon its ? twilight cradle wove of light  
 And let the thoughts which wove its

To clothe the [naked] frozen world with

He has outsoared the shadow of our night

And left in panting behind his flight

Envy and Calumny.

XL*b*

He has outsoared the shadow of our night  
 Envy and calumny and hate and pain  
 And that unrest which men miscall delight

[And long after]  
 Can touch him not and torture not again  
 [slow growth of the cold leprous] stain  
 From the contagion of the worlds  
 He is secure, and now [can] will never  
 A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain  
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn  
 [His] With sparkless ashes [heap fill] load an  
 unlamented urn !

XL

*He has outsoared the shadow of our night ;  
 Envy and calumny, and hate and pain,  
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
 Can touch him not and torture not again ;  
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain  
 He is secure, and now can never mourn  
 A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain ;  
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,  
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.*

XLIIa

Weep  
Mourn not for Adonais. O thou splendour  
[Of the azure Heaven—thou]  
Of Heaven [ azure-green and azure] sea :  
? thou

40

[He is ] tis death indeed not he  
he wakes—[he is—he cannot die]  
[Weep] Mourn not for Adonais—[Thou abyss]  
beautiful caverns ye  
weep no more]  
[Ye ministers whose business was to fly]  
[From Heaven whose azure splendour]  
[Thou] [Who visit giving life to Earth and Sea ;  
Thou with all thy power  
[Ye forests, and ye mountains and thou sea  
[And the wild wonder] [abyss]

684

XLII

*He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he ;  
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,  
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee  
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone ;  
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan !  
Cease ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air  
Which like a morning veil thy scarf hadst thrown  
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare  
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair !*

[Of azure splendour in and Earth]  
Thou young Dawn  
[Weep] Turn all thy dew to splendour—for  
from thee  
The [soul which] spirit thou lamentest is not gone  
Ye [mountains] caverns and ye [mountains]  
forests cease to moan



ADONAI8.

XLI.

XL







ADONAI

XLII.

XL

XLIIb AND XLIIia

flowers and thou soft  
 thou sad Air  
 mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown  
 sad earth bare  
 eternal living stars, which smile on its  
 despair !

will [be not heard]  
 Weep not for Adonais [thou lone bird]  
 Who wert his spirit's sister aught that [living]  
 dying  
 [One note of grief from him who loved]  
 Sweet poet of the  
 [He is become a . . .]  
 He is a part of thee—his voice is music  
 [Wildernesses]  
 his presence may be felt and known

XLIIb

Adonais is  
 Lament no more he has become part of thee  
 [O world that loved him his sweet voice is heard]  
 O Nature ; in thy sounds his sweet voice is heard

Which was his spirit's sister  
 part of Nature's  
 wherever the Eternal  
 Spreading itself where'er that [Eternal] Power  
 may move  
 Which has [absorbed his] withdrawn his being  
 to its own  
 the spirits of the unborn

XLII

*He is made one with Nature : there is heard  
 His voice in all her music, from the moan  
 Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird ;  
 He is a presence to be felt and known  
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,  
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move  
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own ;  
 Which wields the world with never wearied love,  
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.*

XLIIc or XLIIId

He is a portion of the [loveli . . .] beautiful  
 [Which once he made more lovely ; when the  
   skies]                      which now he  
 Which once                      and late he left more bright  
 When

The spirit of the gate is Love  
 And purged with pain and death  
 Which wields the world with never [un]wearied  
   (love)

68 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIIId

He is a portion of the loveliness  
 Which once he made, and now has left more  
   fair  
 In the succession which the [ eternal]  
 When like a storm the spirit's plastic stress  
 Sweeps through the world's dull mass [and  
   tortuous] compelling there  
 All new successions to the forms they wear

Torturing the sluggish shapes which checks its  
   flight  
 To its own image [likeness], even as each may  
   bear  
 [There mingled Adonais]  
 There Adonais mingling hears and with delight  
 And bursting [with] its beauty and its might  
 From [men and beasts] trees and beasts and  
   men, he mingles with . . .

XLIII

*He is a portion of the loveliness  
 Which once he made more lovely : he doth bear  
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress  
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling  
   there  
 All new successions to the forms they wear,  
 Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight  
 To its own likeness, as each mass may bear ;  
 And bursting in its beauty and its might  
 From trees and beasts and men into the Heavens'  
   light.*



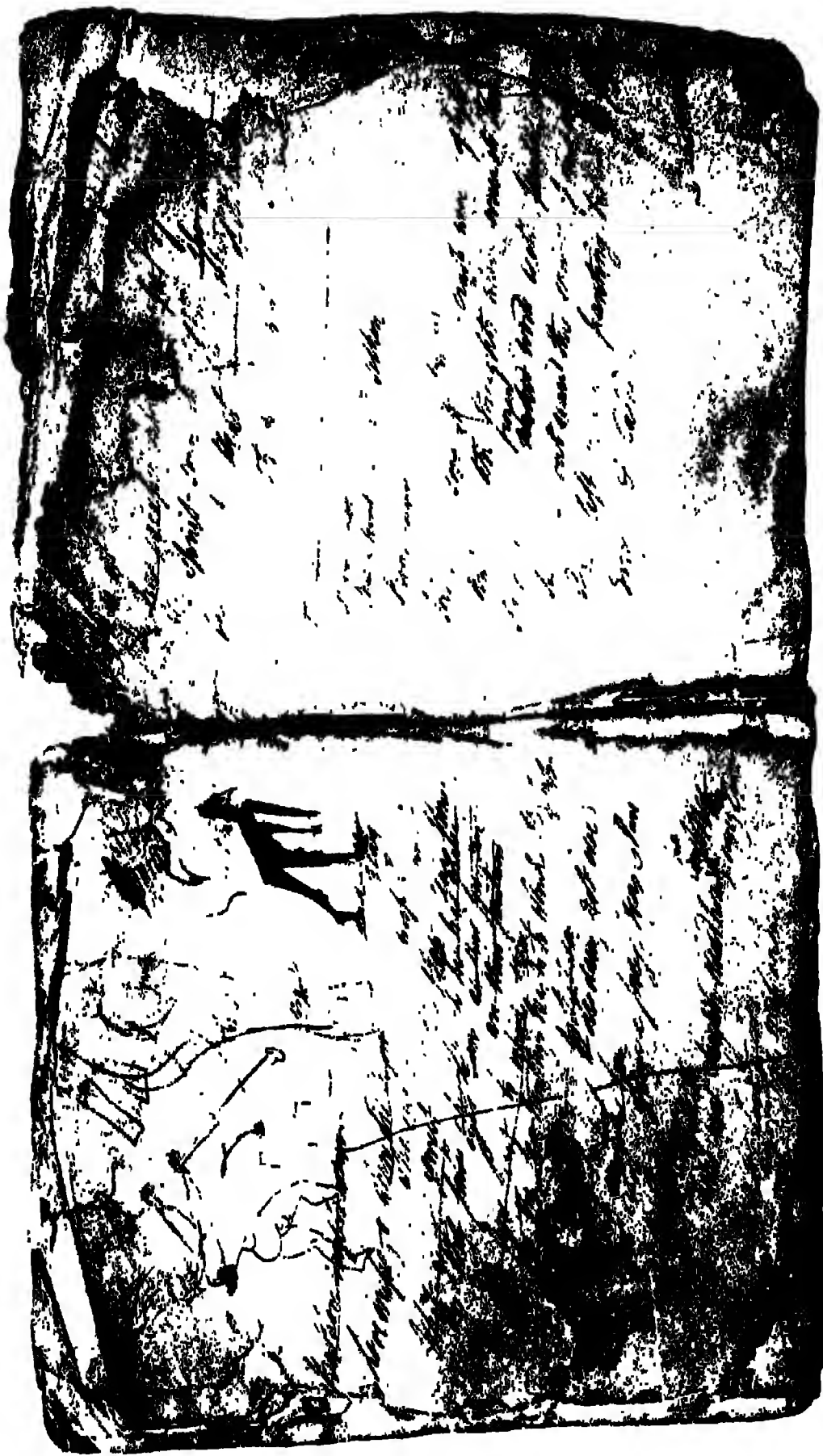
ADONAI.

XLIII.

XLII.







ADONAI.

VI.

XL.

[Not identified]<sup>1</sup>

Love weeps, [O when did before      and alas]  
    who ever knew Love weep ?  
What gentle sweet      though      tears flow  
For thy [fair cheeks] eyes which he has made  
    [all their fountains are their fountains]  
And poor heart to which them  
    for the trembling hearts to which they  
    (? passed)  
    disdain not woe ;  
    prey was slow  
[Which when Hate the]  
Whom Hate's most (? sluggish) bloodhound fill  
    weep [rest] not Love for  
    mayst now weep anew

[Not identified]

A star of Heaven not fallen upon the earth-  
    nations  
A spark of inextinguishable glory splendour—  
A [star] of Heaven has      the abyss  
A [sphearless] star [out of] shaken from the con-  
    stellations  
Which gem the throne [of God—a burning atom  
    [earth and its nations]  
Even like the billow of a deluge  
A burning      of eternal  
A living atom of      eternal Night  
[The lightnings] [The sun is darkness]

<sup>1</sup> [The facsimile is numbered VI in error.]

## Shelley's MS. Note-Book

## DRAFTS OF AN ITALIAN POEM, OR POEMS

[I am indebted to Mr. R. A. Streatfeild for the transcripts and translations of these verses, which do not appear to have been published. Trelawny assured Mr. W. M. Rossetti very positively that Shelley originally wrote the *Epipsychidion* in Italian. Is it possible that these lines form a portion of such a design which he may, or may not, have completed?]

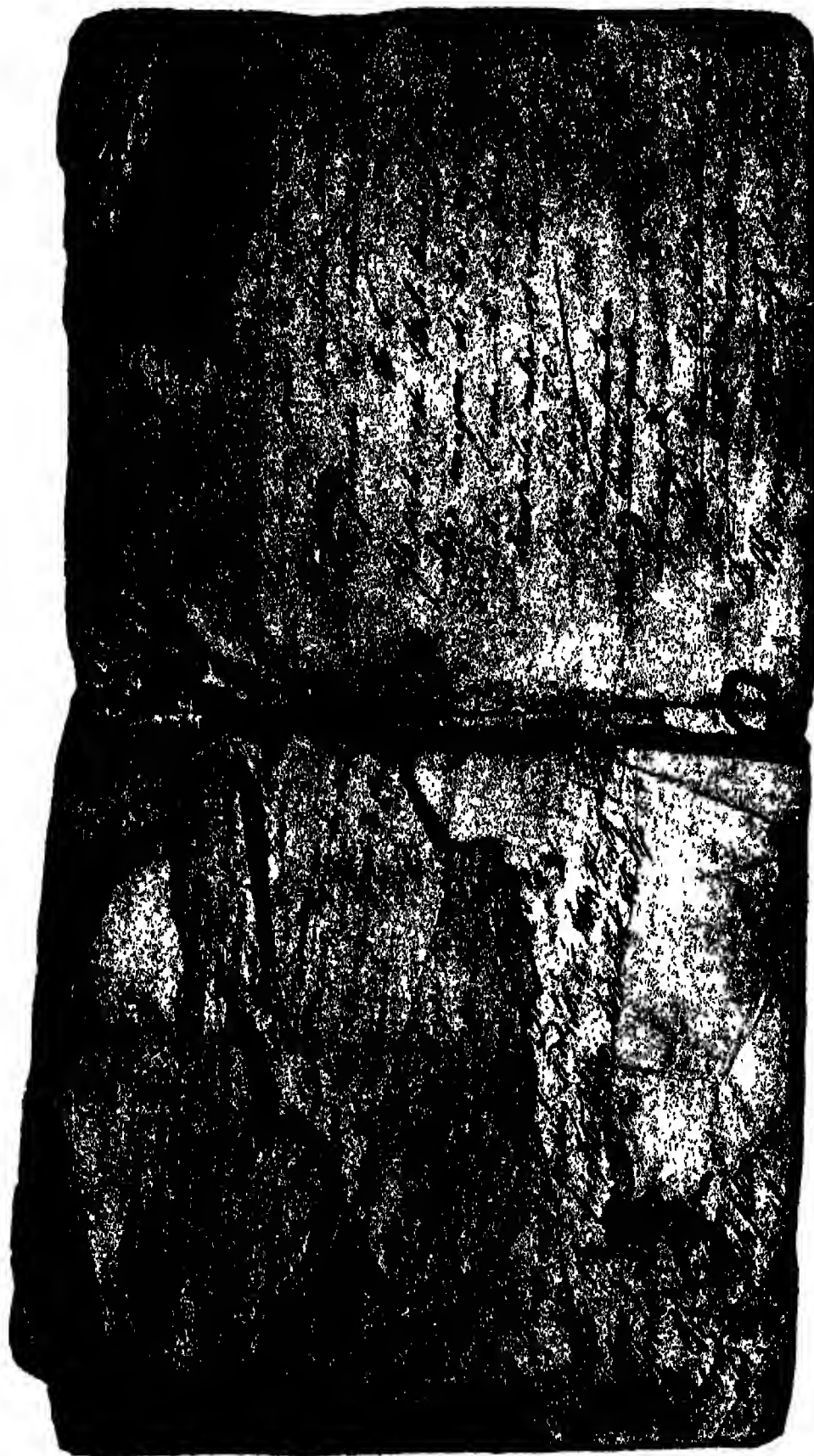
Dal spiro della tua  
La chiara fronte, le labbra amorose  
La guancia dal cadente sole tinta  
Gli occhi, ove spento tempo posa  
Sono immagini dei tuoi in tutta vita  
Quella l' odor tu la stessa rosa  
Questo la ombra al sostegno  
La tua venuta aspettando  
la vita va mancando.

From the breath of thy  
The clear brow, the amorous lips,  
The cheek tinted by the setting sun,  
The eyes, where past time reposes,  
Are images of thine in full life  
This is the fragrance, thou the rose herself  
This shadow in support  
Thy coming                      expecting  
                life fades away.

Ah non pianger, no quaggiù non posso

Ah, weep not, here below I cannot

Dal dura prigionia della passata  
Dal vano pentimento e vana passione  
Dal alta speme mai non compita  
Dalle fantasmi che dal memoria vengon  
Inspirando sogni del presente ora  
O dalle ombre che il futuro anno  
Getta davanti . . .  
Dalla morte moriendo.



ADONAI'S.  
XIX.

DRAFT OF AN ITALIAN POEM.



# Shelley's MS. Note-Book

From the cruel prison of the past,  
From vain repentance and vain passion,  
From the lofty hope that never was fulfilled,  
From the phantasms that come from memory,  
Inspiring dreams of the present hour :  
O from the shades that the coming year  
Throws in advance . . .  
From death                      dying

**Così vestiva in barbari accenti  
Il vero affetto . . . un' armonia.**

So have I clad in barbarous accents  
The true affection . . . a harmony.

Oh non piango, s' io pianger devo  
Il riflusso della sua onda in un  
Dove si prepararebbe fabbricarci  
Un queto asilo, lontan di ogni pena  
Scioglierò un . . . sul purpureo Oceano cielo  
Un queto asilo, che . . . quando

O I weep not, if I should weep  
The reflue of her wave in a  
Where might be prepared for us  
A quiet refuge far from all pain  
I will loose a . . . on the purple { Ocean  
A quiet refuge, where . . . when { heaven

La tua venuta nelle isole eterne  
Non pianger no . . .  
la refluyente stretta  
Mi porto a quel porto dove si aspettamo  
In questo asilo . . .

Thy coming into the eternal isles  
Weep not, no . . .  
                    —the refluent quick  
I take myself to that port where we await each other  
In this refuge . . .

# Shelley's MS. Note-Book

Non mi fu concesso qui

La rapida Pëara

Non ci fu { concesso  
dato d'aggiungere il voto

Non cercherei

Il cielo

Non mai avremo al di là di morte

Così arcato al di là di morte

Un Paradiso, dove tu non stai

It was not granted me here

The rapid Pëara (?)

It was not { granted us  
given us to win our prayer

I would not seek

Heaven

We shall never possess on the far side of death

Thus { hurled } to the other side of death  
arched }

A Paradise, where thou standest not

## TO EMELIA VIVIANI

Send the stars bright,

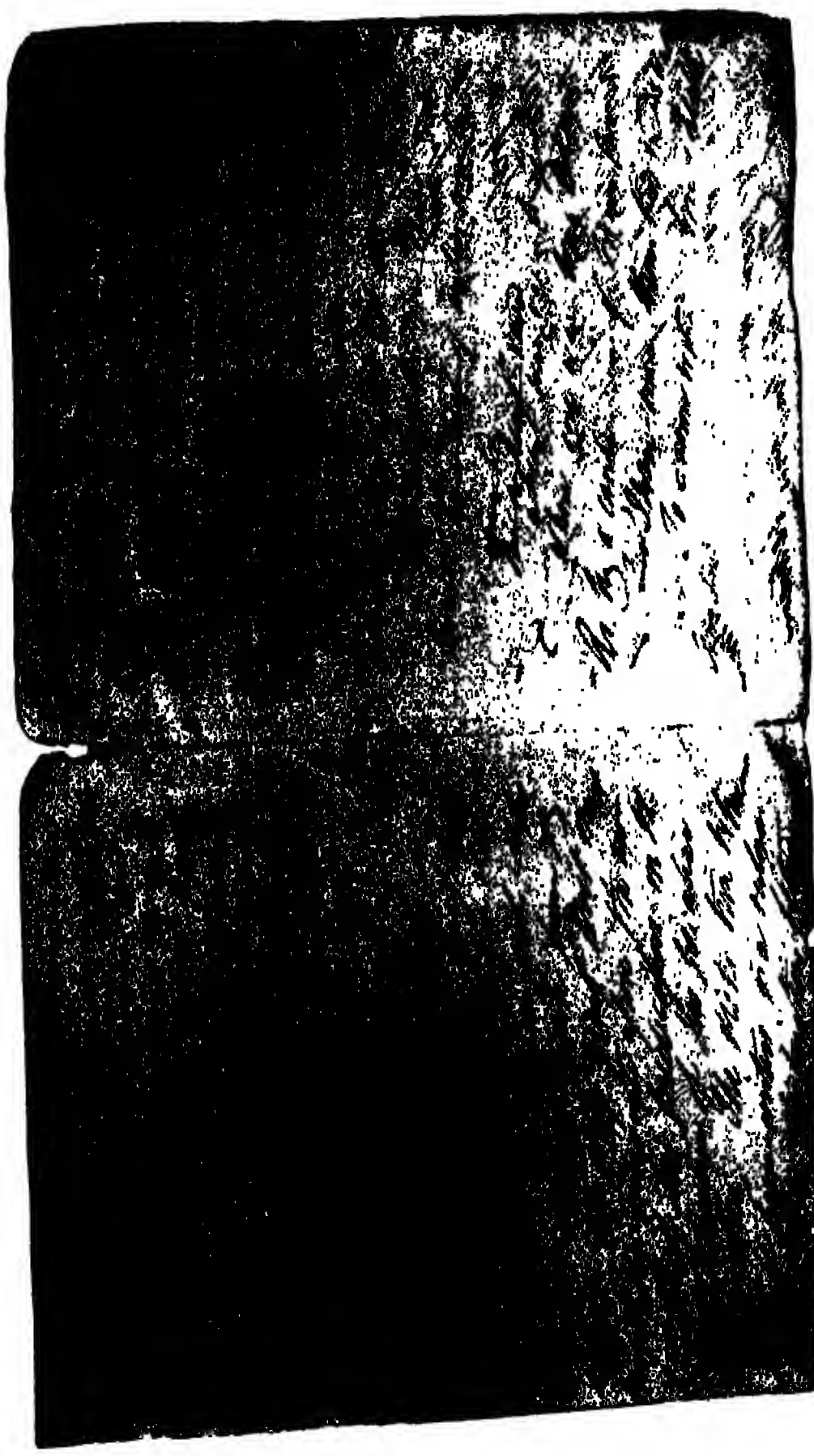
Send not love to me  
withered

Where it has blighted a bosom white

Send the stars bright, but send not love to me  
In whom love ever made  
like

Health [as a heap of] embers soon to fade.

[In a heart is vowed]  
That heart [was] e'er vowed to tears  
When love was long delay  
As by a of living fire  
[For] Then more than this wealth  
To crown with love and health.



TO EMILIA VIVIANI.

DEFENCE OF POETRY.







## Shelley's MS. Note-Book

Madonna wherefore hast thou sent to me  
Sweet basil and mignonette  
[Alas and with]  
[Embleming health which never yet]  
Embleming love and health which never yet  
In the same wreath might be—  
Alas, and they are wet  
And is it with thy kisses or thy tears ?  
For [it is not with dew]  
never rain or dew

Such fragrance drew  
From leaf or flower, the very doubt endears  
[ sighs]  
My sadness ever new  
The sighs I breathe the tears I shed for thee.

[On another sheet Shelley has written some phrases which appear in his lines to Emelia Viviani, and he scribbled, in a feigned hand, the name of Shakespeare three times, and that of Milton twice.

The piece of manuscript on the smaller sheet, which has been reproduced on this plate, does not belong to the MS. note-book. It is the portion of Shelley's draft of "A Satire on Satire": this and another leaf are in the collection of Sir John C. E. Shelley. The fragment was first printed by the late Professor Dowden in the *Correspondence of Robert Southey and Caroline Bowles*, 1880, and subsequently by other editors.]

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